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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation for selected countries and regions

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted to the General Assembly in compliance with its requests contained in resolutions 64/74 and 64/250. It provides a status report and an analysis of the current challenges encountered in the delivery of both humanitarian relief and rehabilitation assistance provided by the United Nations and its partners to countries affected by various types of natural and man-made disasters. In compliance with the request of the Assembly to consolidate and streamline reports whenever possible, the country reports under the present agenda item have once again been consolidated into a single document, covering two countries, Haiti and El Salvador.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted to the General Assembly in compliance with its requests contained in resolutions 64/74 and 64/250. The report covers the period from November 2009 to July 2010.

II. Humanitarian, emergency relief and rehabilitation assistance provided to Haiti in response to the devastating effects of the earthquake in that country

2. The information provided in sections A and B of the present report is based largely on the six-month report of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on the response to the humanitarian crisis in Haiti, introduced during the humanitarian affairs segment of the 2010 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, held in New York.

A. The disaster

3. The earthquake that occurred in Haiti struck at 16.53 local time on 12 January 2010 and had a magnitude of 7.0 on the Richter scale. Its hypocentre was located less than 10 km below the Earth's surface. The epicentre was close to Léogâne, approximately 25 km from Port-au-Prince. An aftershock with a magnitude of 6.0 occurred immediately afterwards, and by 24 January at least 52 aftershocks measuring 4.5 or higher had been recorded.

4. While the exact number of deaths and injuries caused by the earthquake may never be known, the Government estimates that 222,750 people (2 per cent of the population) were killed and 300,572 injured. It is estimated that 3 million people, out of a total population of 10 million, were affected. The human cost of the earthquake in terms of deaths, injuries and homelessness per capita was far greater than that of other recent earthquakes of similar amplitude, primarily because it occurred in a large urban area with many poorly constructed buildings. It is likely that females represented the greatest share of casualties, as many women were at home when the earthquake struck, whereas men were at work and children were on their way home from school. In addition, the high level of damage to public buildings resulted in major loss of life among Haiti's civil servants.

Damage to infrastructure

5. The earthquake crippled Haiti's capital and economic heart, Port-au-Prince, and also destroyed or severely damaged buildings and infrastructure elsewhere, particularly in the towns of Léogâne, Petit-Goâve, Jacmel, Pétionville, Delmas and Carrefour. The Government estimates that 250,000 homes and 30,000 commercial buildings were severely damaged, while the post-disaster needs assessment identified 105,000 completely destroyed homes and more than 208,000 damaged homes. In addition, numerous prominent Government buildings, the cathedral of Port-au-Prince and other public buildings were damaged to varying degrees. In outlying towns affected by the earthquake, municipal administration buildings were

severely damaged. In Léogâne, the closest town to the epicentre, close to 80 per cent of all buildings suffered structural damage.

6. The earthquake seriously damaged the control tower at Toussaint Louverture International Airport and the Port-au-Prince seaport, limiting the use of both the airport and the harbour in the initial stages of the response. Many roads were blocked with debris or had broken surfaces. There was also considerable damage to the communications infrastructure. The earthquake damaged Haiti's only submarine telecommunications cable and rendered unusable the public telephone system, while the services of two of the largest cellular telephone providers were disrupted.

Displacement

7. According to Government figures, approximately 2.3 million people left their homes at the peak of the displacement. Most internally displaced persons settled close to their former areas of residence, either as individual households or in small household groupings. Many settled in the street, at spontaneous settlement sites varying in population from a handful to 50,000, or in collective accommodations. Initially, some 1.5 million displaced people settled in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area, while approximately 600,000 left the affected area, many assisted by the Government and others using private means, to seek shelter with host communities in non-affected areas. Up to 250,000 persons in the latter group have since returned to Port-au-Prince or surrounding communes, either as households or individually. As at the end of May 2010, 1,342 sites for internally displaced persons had been identified in the area affected by the earthquake, the majority of which had populations of between 100 and 1,000 households. In some cases, the sites are located in gullies or flood-prone zones, adding to the vulnerability of those displaced.

Impact on the economy, livelihoods and education

8. In total, the damage and losses caused by the earthquake are estimated to amount to $7.8 billion, which is equivalent to slightly more than the country's gross domestic product (GDP) for 2009. The private sector suffered 70 per cent of the damage and losses. Education facilities were severely affected, with 4,992 schools (23 per cent of the country's schools) either damaged or destroyed. More than 1 million students and 55,000 teachers were affected, while 38,000 students and 1,500 education personnel died.

9. The Haitian health-care system suffered catastrophic damage to its infrastructure. In the three most affected geographic departments (Ouest, Sud-Est and Nippes), 60 per cent of hospitals were severely damaged or destroyed, including the only national teaching and reference (tertiary) hospital. The building housing the Ministry of Health itself collapsed, killing more than 200 staff. The initial damage assessment identified 67 affected health facilities in the services network whose operations had been impaired. The already limited drinking water coverage and waste collection capacity in the affected area were further reduced. There were also severe consequences for the agricultural sector. Thirty-two per cent of farmers in the earthquake-affected rural areas lost their seed stocks, with 4 per cent losing their livestock. Twenty-nine per cent of farm homes were either destroyed or severely damaged. Furthermore, farmers were affected by falling agricultural incomes, the loss of storage and irrigation facilities and distorted markets.

10. Populations outside the earthquake-affected area were also affected from a socio-economic and livelihoods perspective. Vulnerability in those areas increased as a result of the massive displacement of people from the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area, exerting additional pressure on available resources (such as food and firewood), particularly in departments such as Artibonite and Nord-Ouest, which had already been experiencing chronic food insecurity. More than 90 per cent of the internally displaced persons in those areas are being supported by host families, with more than 80 per cent hosted by members of their immediate families. As a consequence, many host families have reportedly resorted to unsustainable coping mechanisms, such as the selling of animals and assets and the consumption of household food reserves, in order to be able to support themselves and the internally displaced households that they are hosting.

11. There has been a particularly high impact in areas near the country's border with the Dominican Republic, to which an estimated 160,000 people have been displaced. Host communities there, particularly in rural areas, are very poor, and, with the arrival of large numbers of internally displaced persons, the basic services in those areas — schools, health-care centres and water supplies — as well as the local economy, are severely overstretched. Humanitarian organizations visiting areas close to the border, such as Fonds-Verrettes in the south-east, or Ouanaminthe in the north-east, reported that households that had previously been composed of 4 to 5 persons were now housing between 12 and 15.

B. Humanitarian response

12. In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, the response was led by the Haitian population. Local communities conducted countless rescue efforts and provided support to the injured. Neighbours, friends, family members and strangers helped one another, saving thousands of lives, while the Government and the international community mobilized their response and tried to overcome initial constraints. However, local communities faced major constraints in their immediate response capacity, including an absence of electricity, widespread debris, limited first-aid skills and extensive trauma, which were compounded by a pervasive fear of aftershocks. Haitian civil society organizations were very active in providing immediate assistance to the affected and displaced population, despite the fact that they themselves had also been extensively affected.

13. The destruction of many national and municipal authority buildings, the death and injury of many civil servants, and the fact that they needed to prioritize support for their own extended families significantly reduced the Government's capacity at both the national and the local levels to lead and coordinate an effective response at the initial stages. The critical national disaster risk management system sustained heavy losses in terms of human and material resources.

14. International humanitarian organizations established in Haiti prior to the disaster began to provide assistance within the first 72 hours. Nearly all were supported by national counterparts within Haitian civil society. Organizations used their pre-positioned relief supplies in the country (mostly contingency stocks left over from preparedness activities for the 2009 hurricane season) to support initial assistance. However, many humanitarian actors present in Haiti prior to the earthquake themselves suffered losses — both in terms of staff killed and injured,

and in terms of offices and homes damaged and destroyed — significantly reducing their response capacities.

15. An initial $575 million six-month flash appeal was prepared within 72 hours and launched on 15 January. This amount was to cover the immediate needs of 3 million affected people, according to preliminary estimates. The appeal was revised upward to $1.5 billion on 18 February, following a more comprehensive needs assessment. During the Mid-Year Review of the Humanitarian Appeal 2010, launched on 14 July, requirements still stood at $1.5 billion. As at 18 August, the appeal was 67 per cent funded, with another $18 million having been pledged. However, it is imperative that full funding of the appeal be achieved if the most vulnerable are to receive the assistance they need.

16. The Central Emergency Response Fund has allocated a total of $36 million for the Haiti response, as well as $2 million for operations in the Dominican Republic. The Emergency Relief Response Fund for Haiti, supported by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, has received some $80 million, of which $64 million has already been programmed.

17. The international actors responding to the earthquake were a remarkably varied group. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimated that 400 humanitarian actors were operational by the end of January alone. With such a large number, effective coordination was critical to the response. The cluster system was activated on 15 January, organizing the response operation through 12 clusters and 2 sub-clusters. To the extent possible, the Government appointed counterpart Ministries to co-lead each cluster, and by May it had intensified its involvement with clusters in response planning and implementation at all levels.

18. The humanitarian country team was established during the first week of February and met twice per week throughout the initial emergency phase to address key strategic issues related to the humanitarian response. The team is led by the Humanitarian Coordinator and includes the participation of seven United Nations agencies, seven non-governmental organizations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, observers from the Non-Governmental Organization Coordination Support Office and, in the case of expanded team meetings, humanitarian donors. Strategic coordination was strengthened with the establishment of the positions of a Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator and a Senior Humanitarian Adviser to the Humanitarian Coordinator. The local office of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was substantially strengthened to provide dedicated support to the humanitarian community in the areas of inter-cluster coordination, information management and analysis, mapping, civil-military liaison, donor coordination, advocacy and media outreach.

19. Effective coordination with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and with the military forces of the United States of America and other foreign countries, was critical for the humanitarian community in the early stages of the response, to fully capitalize on the substantial military and Mission assets present in the country. A coordination support committee was established to oversee strategic coordination. This unique structure, co-chaired by the Mission's two Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and the Government, brought together donors, representatives of the humanitarian community, MINUSTAH and representatives of the United States military to address key strategic issues. Through its planning task force, comprising a management

oversight board and a project management coordination cell, the Committee planned complex operations involving multiple stakeholders, addressing critical mitigation measures, debris management and site preparation for the relocation of the internally displaced.

20. MINUSTAH, in coordination with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the logistics cluster and other key partners, established a joint operations and tasking centre to facilitate the provision of assistance by the broad range of military forces, in order to expedite the activities of the humanitarian community — in essence, to serve as a "one-stop shop" for humanitarian actors seeking the assistance of the Mission's military and police capacities. The centres, composed of representatives of the Office, MINUSTAH, other international military forces, the logistics cluster and the Government, served as a centralized body for coordinating the use of military assets for logistics support, security assistance, and technical assistance in support of humanitarian operations, preventing duplication of support efforts in country-wide coordination. Requests for military assistance combined with the transport of humanitarian commodities or other such support were vetted through each cluster lead agency.

21. In order to ensure that the humanitarian response addressed the needs in the affected areas outside Port-au-Prince, including in host communities, coordination capacity was established in Léogâne, Petit-Goâve, Jacmel and Gonaïves. Eight clusters were operational in Léogâne and seven in Jacmel, with cluster coordination also taking place in Gonaïves and Petit-Goâve. At the subnational level, there was particular emphasis on reinforcing coordination with ministries and local authorities. The humanitarian community also established six "shadow clusters" in the Dominican Republic — logistics and telecommunications; health; emergency shelter; water, sanitation and hygiene; nutrition; and protection — primarily to coordinate support services for the Haiti response operations and border or cross-border relief operations. Coordination was strengthened with non-governmental organization partners, particularly during the first months of the response, through the establishment of a Non-Governmental Organization Coordination Support Office, supported by two non-governmental organization consortiums, InterAction and the International Council of Voluntary Agencies, to facilitate better communication among non-governmental organizations, to create linkages and partnerships with local Haitian organizations unfamiliar with the international humanitarian system, and to ensure that key issues of concern to non-governmental organizations were communicated and taken into account in the response.

Critical humanitarian challenges

22. The humanitarian community's response to the earthquake was a considerable achievement in the face of a multitude of challenges. It represented a major test of the capacity, resources, response readiness and modus operandi of the global humanitarian community. The devastation caused by the earthquake was compounded by underlying vulnerabilities in Haiti, including systemic poverty, structural challenges, weak governance and almost annual exposure to floods, hurricanes and related disasters. In addition, the earthquake occurred in an urban setting, a context that was unfamiliar to many humanitarian actors and presented significant logistics and access hurdles. It is worth recalling that those who would normally have been at the front line of the response in Haiti — the Government, civil society, MINUSTAH and humanitarian organizations with a presence in the

country prior to the earthquake — were themselves severely affected in terms of loss of capacities, resources and staff, which seriously undermined their ability to respond effectively and swiftly. Despite the challenging operating environment, the humanitarian operation largely achieved its immediate objectives and responded effectively to the critical needs identified.

23. Within the first six months of the humanitarian response, approximately 4 million people had received food assistance, emergency shelter materials had been distributed to 1.5 million people, safe water had been made available to 1.2 million, and 1 million had benefited from cash-for-work programmes. In camps and spontaneous settlements, basic services such as health clinics, educational support, and water and sanitation facilities had been provided to approximately 1.5 million internally displaced persons, while joint patrolling by MINUSTAH and Haitian police were helping to protect the most vulnerable. In rural areas, more than 142,000 farming families had been supported with critical inputs for the spring planting season, while targeted nutritional programmes had been implemented to reduce severe acute malnutrition among those affected by the earthquake. Essential to the efficiency of the response have been common logistics services supporting more than 90 humanitarian organizations in the delivery of a total of 9,300 metric tons of life-saving relief supplies from the Dominican Republic.

24. In an operation of the size and complexity of the earthquake response in Haiti, coherent and commonly agreed humanitarian coordination mechanisms are critical from the outset, to help to channel and coordinate the wide-ranging resources and capacities available. The influx of thousands of humanitarian actors with varying degrees of capacity and expertise posed a challenge for the coordination dynamics of the response. The presence and assets of well-resourced and potent military entities, including in particular the United States military, but also MINUSTAH, presented both opportunities and challenges for the humanitarian community. Humanitarian actors required military support in facilitating the transport and distribution of assistance, but were reluctant to engage too closely, as that would risk undermining the humanitarian principles so central to their modus operandi. The swift establishment of clusters to ensure effective sectoral coordination, and the convening of the humanitarian country team to provide overall strategic guidance, were positive steps towards strengthened coordination of the response. Meanwhile, the establishment of coordination structures engaging both military and humanitarian actors in a joint decision-making and resource-tasking enterprise was critical to the absorption of extensive military assets into the humanitarian response operation.

25. Despite those significant achievements, there was a perception of a leadership/coordination deficit in Haiti during the initial phase of the response operation, in which others — for example, military actors — believed that they had to step in to supplement humanitarian leadership on the ground, which they saw as not providing sufficient strategic vision or overall visible coherence. They considered that critical strategic decisions having an impact on the efficacy and appropriateness of the humanitarian response — such as those involving strategies to provide for immediate assistance to and the longer-term resettlement of those displaced, and more strategic targeting of assistance to prevent significant population movements — were slow in coming. Regardless of the validity of that criticism in the initial weeks following the earthquake, huge strides were made during subsequent months in strengthening the coordination of the response.

Humanitarian leadership was strengthened over time, and clusters became increasingly operational, deploying senior and experienced coordinators and providing effective coordination in a potentially chaotic operating environment. The initial coordination and leadership challenges do not bring into question individual performance, but rather highlight the need to reinforce endorsed systems and structures and to make sure that individuals required to lead are provided with the means to do so.

26. In a highly complex context such as Haiti, the humanitarian community was faced with challenging dilemmas in the provision of assistance, not least in identifying the most vulnerable and in distinguishing between those affected by the earthquake and those suffering from chronic poverty — in this instance, the majority of the population. An equally challenging question was related to identifying and strengthening the linkages between the relief operation and longer-term reconstruction and development efforts. The humanitarian community in Haiti had a critical role to play in supporting the Government, which itself had been severely affected by the earthquake, in leading the reconstruction efforts. Particularly during the initial phase of the response, the international humanitarian community's engagement with Haitian civil society and local authorities, and their inclusion in common coordination mechanisms, could have been better. Had this been accomplished in a more systematic manner, it would have significantly improved the humanitarian community's understanding of the operating context and contributed to the more sustainable provision of assistance, as well as to local and national capacity-building.

27. With a cross-sectoral funding appeal revised in June to request nearly $1.5 billion for relief operations alone, it is clear that the needs in Haiti are still immense and the challenges facing the response operation potentially daunting. Foremost among those challenges is providing shelter, including in particular identifying with the Government durable solutions aimed at the secure settlement of the displaced population. Providing safer shelter alternatives will require significant financial resources, complex legal arrangements and the mobilization of all actors around a shared vision. The issue of inadequate shelter is particularly worrisome during the hurricane season, which is why contingency planning and preparedness activities have been a major focus in recent months.

Gender aspects

28. Women and men as well as girls and boys are affected differently in times of crisis and experience different challenges in gaining access to humanitarian protection and assistance. In Haiti, a Gender Adviser from the Gender Standby Capacity roster was deployed immediately following the earthquake to provide advice to clusters/sectors on gender mainstreaming. This included guidance on safe food distribution, safe shelters, separate latrines and bathing facilities, ensuring equal access to income-generating efforts and including women in camp management. Moving forward, priority should be given to the creation of economic opportunities for marginalized groups in society, in particular women, who make up more than 60 per cent of heads of households in Haiti.

29. Poverty is the underlying cause of gender inequity and among the main causes of sexual violence. This is compounded by women's lack of decision-making power in Haitian society and by poorly functioning Government institutions, including

poor service delivery. Sexual violence was exacerbated by the disaster, and measures to prevent gender-based violence, including protection patrols and improved lighting in camps, were immediately put into place. Providing assistance to victims of gender-based violence, including ensuring safe access to medical care and other referral options, was also prioritized. The opportunity presented by the upcoming elections in November 2010 to advocate at the political, social and economic levels the reformation of Government institutions in order to enforce the rule of law and end the impunity of perpetrators of violence will be seized.

30. Protecting vulnerable populations from sexual exploitation and abuse remains a priority for development, humanitarian and peacekeeping personnel. In Haiti, work to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse was undertaken early in the post-earthquake response with the deployment of a full-time coordinator who worked with United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations to put into place awareness-raising and complaint mechanisms in order to prevent and respond to abuses.

Findings and lessons learned

31. The challenging and complex nature of the humanitarian response to the Haiti earthquake has presented the humanitarian community with some key lessons. Foremost among them is that there is a need to understand better — and to work more proactively with — various actors from outside the humanitarian context, including military entities and the private sector. Linked to this is the pressing imperative of identifying ways in which to engage better with affected Governments and civil society partners. The global humanitarian architecture must be improved to ensure that it is not implemented in such a way as to preclude such partnerships, which are critical for the most effective responses.

32. Another key lesson learned is that the humanitarian community must review how it should adapt to urban responses and must identify the expertise, tools, knowledge and partnerships it needs if it is to be able to operate effectively in such environments. More broadly, there is a need to ensure a better understanding of vulnerability and what it means in terms of humanitarian assistance strategies. One way to do this is by learning how to communicate better with disaster-affected populations, which would lead to an improved understanding of the operating context.

33. It is clear that strong, decisive and empowered humanitarian leadership on the ground at all levels is essential for the effective functioning of a response operation. With strong and experienced leadership providing the required strategic vision, including within the clusters, operational response becomes more efficient, effective, and coherent.

34. Thus, the role of the Humanitarian Coordinator is critical in the overall leadership of the response. The Coordinator is responsible for providing strategic vision and guidance to the humanitarian community, for establishing and maintaining comprehensive coordination mechanisms that include all operational actors, for helping to determine the division of responsibilities among agencies, for maintaining close liaison with the Government, and for ensuring coordination with all other actors relevant to the response. In a context such as Haiti, it was clear that those functions could not have been effectively performed by one person alone,

particularly if that person also had responsibilities within an integrated United Nations mission.

35. The swift establishment of a coherent and well-functioning humanitarian country team, particularly in a large-scale sudden-onset emergency, is critical for the efficacy of the response, primarily as it provides the necessary strategic guidance to the operational actors engaged in the response through the cluster system.

36. If clusters are to become rapidly operational so that they can coordinate a plethora of humanitarian partners within coherent and efficient sectoral structures, it is imperative that they be able to deploy experienced and well-resourced cluster coordinators in the initial stages of the response. Cluster lead agencies must be as accountable for the way in which they carry out their responsibilities within the cluster as they are for the way in which they do so within their respective agencies. It is critical that they balance those sometimes competing roles and ensure that appropriate and adequate resources are allocated for the effective functioning of the clusters that they lead. It is also crucial that cluster lead agencies represent not only agency priorities, but also cluster priorities, at strategic discussions within the framework of the humanitarian country team. It is equally important that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as the entity responsible for inter-cluster coordination, demonstrate appropriate coordination and leadership capacity from the earliest phase of the operation, so as to support the clusters in doing their jobs more effectively.

C. Early recovery and reconstruction

37. From the outset of the humanitarian response, as well as during the recovery and reconstruction phases, the United Nations country team has integrated and implemented early recovery activities in consultation with the Government.

38. Given the challenges that Haiti was facing before the disaster, recovery efforts have been aimed at addressing wider needs and at "building back better". Prior to the earthquake, 55 per cent of the population lived on less than $1.25 per day, only 51 per cent of the rural population and 70 per cent of the urban population had access to clean drinking water, and less than 32 per cent of the total population had access to adequate sanitation (as little as 18 per cent in rural areas). At 72 deaths per 1,000 live births, the child mortality rate was extremely high, twice the regional average, and children were afflicted by high rates of stunting (22 per cent of those under 5) and wasting (10 per cent of those under 5). Between 28 and 38 per cent of the population was considered acutely food-insecure. Forty-four per cent of people urgently requiring health care were unable to gain access to health services, owing to a lack of means to pay for medical fees. Between 50 and 55 per cent of children were not enrolled in school, resulting in one of the highest illiteracy rates on the continent.

39. Furthermore, for several decades, unbridled urbanization has been an emerging hazard in the city of Port-au-Prince and in the surrounding metropolitan area, as well as in most towns in the countryside. The lack of skills and expertise in building reinforced concrete structures, and the failure to maintain buildings and to strengthen building codes are the most serious problems facing urban settlements in Haiti. The insufficient quality control over self-built and contractor-built structures, the lack of regulation of and control over land use and urban planning, and the lack

of knowledge about risk zoning have further increased the vulnerability of urban dwellers. Rapid and unplanned urbanization have also created challenges for the effective provision of public services such as water, energy, sanitation and household waste collection. There are no road systems near most slums, and those that do exist are unpaved and are damaged during the rainy season each year.

40. Given those underlying challenges, the Organization's vision is one of helping the Government to build a more decentralized and deconcentrated Haiti in which homes, infrastructures and services can withstand natural disasters and people's lives are protected. Following are some of the main rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts conducted to date.

Post-disaster needs assessment

41. The post-disaster needs assessment, led by the Government and supported by the United Nations and the World Bank, determined the extent of the damages, losses and recovery and reconstruction needs resulting directly or indirectly from the earthquake. The assessment also identified medium- to longer-term recovery and reconstruction needs across a range of sectors, including broadly defined economic recovery needs of directly and indirectly affected populations, as well as the need to integrate disaster risk reduction into the most vulnerable sectors, such as education, health, habitat and the environment.

Cash for work

42. A cash-for-work programme was introduced eight days after the earthquake to provide short-term employment opportunities and to inject money into the local economy in areas affected by the earthquake. The programme has also been aimed at increasing social and economic stability and improving food security during a period of high vulnerability. It has been implemented in collaboration with key Government partners, the Direction Nationale de l'Eau Potable et de l'Assainissement, the Ministries of the Environment and Agriculture, local authorities and national and international non-governmental organizations.

43. As at 1 July 2010, more than 116,000 workers had been employed, 40 per cent of whom are women. Working six-hour shifts on a 12- or 24-day cycle, workers have undertaken labour-intensive tasks such as removing and disposing of street debris and garbage, and cleaning drainage systems and canals used as water evacuation routes in preparation for the rainy season. In collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP), 19 joint cash/food-for-work projects (compensation includes 60 per cent cash and 40 per cent food) have been implemented in localities affected directly or indirectly by the earthquake, employing some 13,000 people per month. The projects have been focused on small-scale infrastructure rehabilitation and disaster risk mitigation, such as the rehabilitation or construction of schools, health-care facilities, water and sanitation systems, marketplaces, irrigation systems, watershed management systems and recreation facilities. Support for the recovery of the private sector and for the development of private-public sector partnerships is also planned.

Disaster risk reduction and preparedness

44. The United Nations is continuing its efforts to support the Government by strengthening its disaster risk management programme. Efforts have been focused

on strengthening the national risk and disaster management system and the Direction de la Protection Civile. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, Margareta Wahlström, visited Haiti in April to meet with Government officials and review opportunities to strengthen risk reduction measures in the context of both the ongoing humanitarian efforts and the initial recovery work. She recommended that efforts be focused on preparedness for the hurricane season, mainly through the strengthening of existing local capacities and warning systems, and that an independent mechanism be established to monitor the integration of risk into the recovery efforts in support of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission.

45. The United Nations, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, with support from the Office of the Special Envoy for Haiti, initiated a rapid multi-hazard analysis and maps to support the humanitarian activities and longer-term recovery efforts. The analysis also resulted in recommendations for the strengthening of national institutions in the area of disaster risk assessment. The information produced was integrated into existing national centres for data management and the Geographic Information System.

46. In preparation for the hurricane season, the United Nations established four logistics hubs within the country, with WFP pre-positioning 2 million emergency rations and the shelter cluster stockpiling emergency shelter supplies and other non-food items. Furthermore, the United Nations carried out risk assessment and mitigation efforts in more than 130 vulnerable camps and explained basic preparedness techniques to camp residents. The United Nations has also set aside $13 million as emergency funding in the event of a humanitarian crisis.

Land use planning and natural resource management

47. As part of the Government's programme on territorial information for sustainable development, and as recommended by the post-disaster needs assessment as an urgent priority, the United Nations supported the establishment of a national observatory on the environment and vulnerability to gather data and provide analysis to promote more effective interventions. The Organization also played a key role in mobilizing financial resources for environmental programmes aimed at improving the management of key watersheds and protected areas as a strategy for increasing the country's resilience.

Debris management

48. The United Nations debris management programme contributed technical expertise to the debris removal and recycling strategies of the Government and the humanitarian community. In an effort to promote sustainable recycling, rather than just demolition and dumping, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership with the Office of the Mayor of Léogâne and the humanitarian community, launched a pilot recycling site for debris and showcased best practices that could serve as a neighbourhood-based recovery model for other programmes throughout the country.

Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals programme

49. During the post-disaster needs assessment exercise, in the light of the "brain drain" that had been occurring since the earthquake, the Government of Haiti

identified the need to engage the Haitian diaspora to assist in the country's recovery. On the basis of previous knowledge and experience gained through the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals programme of United Nations Volunteers, UNDP has proposed a three-year programme to enable expatriates to return home for a period ranging from two weeks to three months to lend their skills and services to the development of their homeland. A first consultation workshop, chaired by the Ministry of Haitians Living Abroad and held on 11 June in Port-au-Prince, brought together representatives of the diaspora, local authorities, the private sector, civil society and the international community to explore the best means by which the programme could assist in rebuilding Haiti.

Rule of law, justice and security

50. As an immediate response to the destruction of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, the United Nations identified immediate needs and provided basic equipment to the justice, prison and police sectors. Four prefabricated buildings serving as temporary offices for senior ministry officials were erected, and two 250-square-metre tents with 55 workstations were provided for the Ministry and the Haitian National Police. The Ministry was also supported in modernizing the prison at Saint Marc and through the provision of Internet facilities. In addition, UNDP is supporting the ministerial Cabinet through the provision of full office facilities.

51. The United Nations supported the police and the judiciary by providing for training and capacity-building. Training was provided for 15 public prosecutors at the Ecole de la Magistrature d'Haiti, for magistrates in France in autumn 2010 and for the Ministry's unit heads, and a course in crime scene management was provided for police and magistrates. In order to respond to the particular needs of displaced people, the United Nations is supporting, on a pilot basis, a mobile court to deal with day-to-day criminal cases. The United Nations is also involved in the construction of the maritime base and the building housing the office of the Inspector General of the National Police in Les Cayes. It has also supported the Government in strengthening the national detainee database, which serves as the main tool enabling the National Police and United Nations police to identify prisoners who escaped following the earthquake.

"Football for peace"

52. On 19 June, the UNDP rule-of-law programme kicked off its "football for peace" initiative. Conducted in some of the larger towns outside Port-au-Prince, events included a football tournament featuring teams comprising police officers, students, journalists and teenagers, as well as screenings of recorded football games, anti-violence movies and documentaries, followed by group discussions. The "football for peace" initiative is part of a UNDP partnership with the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Population Fund aimed at raising awareness in communities throughout Haiti about efforts to prevent domestic violence, crime and gender-based violence.

Aid management and coordination

53. In the spirit of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action, a customized aid information management system was developed and operationalized by the United Nations in 2008 for the Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation, with the aim of bolstering national capacities for the planning and monitoring of external aid. As a result of the upsurge in international aid pledges following the earthquake, UNDP scaled up its aid management engagement, brought new partners on board and developed a new project to support the Ministry, the Office of the Prime Minister, other Government bodies and relevant partners, including the private sector, in addressing challenges related to the effective and transparent management of external aid.

Findings and lessons learned

54. In order to be successful, the humanitarian response in Haiti must dovetail with the recovery and reconstruction efforts, having clear priorities and benchmarks. The establishment of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission is an important step in that regard.

55. It is important to provide people with the right incentives to move out of the camps and to return to their communities and neighbourhoods. While life-supporting services such as a water supply will be required by those who have no choice but to stay in camps, it is vital to avoid attracting people to the camps by concentrating services there that could be provided elsewhere. Facilities such as schools and clinics should be based in communities, not in camps, so that those who return home can have continued access to help.

56. Rubble removal is a major challenge. The earthquake generated more than 20 million cubic metres of debris, which is a major impediment to reconstruction. The necessary scaling-up of the removal process, however, requires not only more trucks, but also more appropriate landfill sites designated by the Government. In addition to the purely physical removal of rubble, there is the opportunity to stimulate communities through an improved quality of life.

57. Participation is also vital. The Organization must become better at talking and listening to communities, and at involving them as partners in the response. It is only with the full participation and involvement of local communities that effective reconstruction will be achieved. The people of Haiti must be the architects of their own recovery and future.

58. The deconcentration of the urban population and development efforts beyond the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area are essential. Already today, the United Nations has more than 500 civilian personnel located outside the capital, working on humanitarian and recovery initiatives.

59. The need for disaster risk reduction must be addressed early in the humanitarian and recovery processes. If this is to be done effectively, there must be baseline information regarding the level and the distribution of risk, as well as standards and codes and the capacity to enforce them. Incentives and capacities for addressing risk across recovery efforts in all sectors will be an essential first step, together with ongoing monitoring.

III. Humanitarian, emergency relief and rehabilitation assistance provided to El Salvador as a result of the devastating effects of Hurricane Ida

A. The disaster

60. On 7 November 2009, the combined effects of Hurricane Ida and a low-pressure system off the Pacific coast produced heavy rainfall in El Salvador (355mm within a few hours), causing severe flooding and landslides in 7 of the country's 14 geographical departments (25 per cent of the national territory) and resulting in 199 casualties. In total, more than 120,000 people were affected, with some 15,000 fleeing to emergency shelters during the initial weeks following the disaster.

61. A post-disaster needs assessment indicated that damage and losses amounted to approximately $240 million, representing 1.1 per cent of the country's gross national product. This included $89.4 million in losses associated with infrastructure damage, as well as a slowdown in productive and social activities. El Salvador also suffered $42.5 million in agricultural losses, with heavy damage to irrigation systems and losses in terms of crops such as coffee, sugar cane and red beans. The housing sector registered losses and damage totalling some $18.4 million, with 20,000 homes destroyed, severely damaged or at risk. The Government estimated that $343 million was needed to ensure the recovery of affected areas.

B. Response

62. Overall, the United Nations system invested $16 million to provide assistance to more than 120,000 people in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida and to support the Government of El Salvador in coordinating the humanitarian response in key areas: food assistance, education, temporary shelter, agriculture, health care, water and sanitation, coordination and early recovery.

63. In response to the disaster, the United Nations immediately activated its contingency plan and provided support to the Government by assessing the damage. A humanitarian country team was deployed, including representatives of IOM and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. A disaster assessment and coordination team was immediately deployed to support the Government and the United Nations system with needs assessment expertise, information analysis and initial coordination of relief efforts. Recommendations made by the team served to strengthen the national disaster response and preparedness capacity beyond the immediate relief phase. In terms of the cluster system, the humanitarian country team activated clusters in the areas mentioned above. At the global level, both the shelter cluster and the water, sanitation and hygiene cluster were activated, which proved crucial in meeting gaps related to those two sectors in the initial response.

64. On 18 November 2009, the humanitarian community in El Salvador, with support from staff of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs deployed from its regional office in Panama, and in close cooperation with the Government, launched a flash appeal requesting $14 million to initially assist 75,000 people over a six-month period. The humanitarian country team also requested and received $2.5 million in rapid response grants from the Central

Emergency Response Fund. Unfortunately, overall donor funding of the appeal stalled at 46 per cent ($6.7 million). As is often the case in similar emergencies in Latin America, the Fund was the single largest funding source, representing 37 per cent of all resources mobilized by the flash appeal and approximately 14 per cent of the overall international humanitarian funding received by El Salvador. The Government also allocated a significant amount of funding for immediate relief operations.

Food assistance

65. WFP provided food assistance to 11,000 people in shelters as well as to 155 communities in 35 municipalities located in seven departments of the country. More than 55,000 people benefited from food-for-work programmes focusing on rehabilitation and reconstruction. More than 7,000 children under 5 years old, pregnant and lactating mothers and elderly persons in affected communities received supplementary nutrition.

Agriculture

66. In order to support and reactivate agricultural activities in the affected areas, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations assisted 1,000 families by establishing backyard plots in eight municipalities. More than 1,500 small producers received seeds and fertilizer in 13 municipalities, and 674 families in 4 municipalities were provided with modules for breeding dual-purpose birds.

Health care

67. Health-care assistance was provided to 122,000 people to reduce morbidity and mortality among the affected population and to improve access to health-care services. More than 5,015 family kits and 4,165 women's personal hygiene kits were distributed to people housed in shelters.

Water, sanitation and hygiene

68. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provided 50,000 plastic containers and disinfectant for water, and the Pan American Health Organization provided 100 latrines and showers for a population of 28,000 and materials for the cleaning of 50 community wells.

Education and protection

69. UNICEF provided school furniture and educational materials for 22 damaged schools. Additionally, 51 days of training were provided for more than 2,000 young people, and 500 psychosocial kits were distributed.

Shelter

70. IOM provided assistance and monitoring activities in 74 shelters throughout the country, with a total population of 7,518. UNICEF delivered 2,000 kits including essential items to encourage people to return from shelters to their settlements.

Temporary housing

71. UNDP played a key role in leading, in coordination with the Government, donors and non-governmental organizations, efforts to build temporary housing. UNDP supported the construction of 763 temporary houses in 19 municipalities located in 5 departments. As part of the temporary housing programme, community organizing and cash-for-work projects were carried out.

National civil protection system

72. In order to strengthen the national civil protection system, the United Nations supported five technical committees (related to emergency response, infrastructure and basic services, health care, logistics and shelter) in preparing and updating their preparedness and response plans. In support of local institutions, the Organization also supported the establishment of municipal civil protection commissions in the most affected regions — Verapaz, Tepetitán and Guadalupe — to strengthen emergency response and preparedness capacities relating to first aid, the legal aspects of civil protection, emergency management, inter-institutional communication and the management of temporary shelters.

Disaster risk reduction

73. The Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction has been supporting and advising the national civil protection directorate of El Salvador in developing a national disaster risk reduction plan and strengthening its national disaster risk reduction platform, in close consultation with the Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America. The United Nations country team devoted considerable effort to the integration of risk management into a national urban and rural poverty programme. In two municipalities, the initiative built the capacities of partner institutions in terms of risk management and prevention, and emergency response. It will be replicated in 25 other municipalities.

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General Assembly

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Eradication of poverty and other development issues

Social development

Advancement of women

Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Promotion and protection of human rights

Letter date d 24 August 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

On 29 June 2010, the Government of Brazil, the Government of the Russian Federation, the World Bank and the World Food Programme held a forum, on the margins of the 2010 session of the Economic and Social Council, at United Nations Headquarters in New York entitled "Feed minds, change lives: school feeding, the Millennium Development Goals and girls' empowerment". I have the honour to enclose the summary report of the conclusions reached by the forum (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate the text of the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Maria Luiza Ribeiro **Viotti**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations

* A/65/150.

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Annex to the letter dated 24 August 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Summary report of the 29 June 2010 forum on "Feed minds, change lives: school feeding, the Millennium Development Goals and girls' empowerment"

1. On the occasion of the 2010 session of the Economic and Social Council, a forum entitled "Feed minds, change lives: school feeding, the Millennium Development Goals and girls' empowerment" was co-sponsored by the Governments of Brazil and the Russian Federation, the World Bank and the World Food Programme (WFP), as part of global advocacy efforts to foster greater awareness of the importance and value of school feeding. The forum provided a platform for the discussion of school feeding as an effective form of social protection for targeting hunger and undernutrition, an investment in long-term development and stability, an instrument in support of gender equality and a contribution towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

2. The Forum took the form of a two-hour panel discussion and presented an opportunity for the sharing of experiences by experts in the field and for the presentation of practical country examples by national authorities from various regions. Finally, the forum also provided an opportunity to highlight challenges and best practices, with the objective of re-energizing the dialogue on school feeding in preparation for the outcome document of the September 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, currently under negotiation.

3. The panel event was chaired by the Minister of State for Family and Population of Egypt, Moushira Mahmoud Khattab. The panel of experts included the following: Albaneide Peixinho, National School Feeding Coordinator-General, Ministry of Education of Brazil; Valdimir Chernikov, Deputy Director of the Department of Administrative Work and Exterior Relations of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Russian Federation; Margaret Ndanyi, Head of School, Health and Nutrition at the Ministry of Education of Kenya; Evelyn Perard, Coordinator of the National School Feeding Programme of Haiti; Nancy Walters, Chief of School Feeding Policy, WFP; and Don Bundy, Lead Specialist on School Health, Nutrition and HIV/AIDS and Education at the World Bank. The event was facilitated by Phil Hay, Communications Adviser at the Human Development Network of the World Bank.

Panellist remarks

Egypt

4. The representative of Egypt said that investing in children was of utmost importance. Child poverty was different from adult poverty, which was important to consider when deciding how best to address the challenges of poverty. School feeding was not merely about delivering food to children to keep them healthy; it was about the inherent right of every child to life and survival and the right to be protected from child labour and child marriage, as enshrined in articles 6 and 27 of

the Convention on the Rights of the Child. School feeding was also instrumental to ensure the right to education and a decent standard of living.

Brazil

5. The representative of Brazil shared the Brazilian school feeding experience, which had become an integral part of Brazil's growth strategy and fight against hunger. The school feeding programme, which reached 47 million children, had become a wide success not only in Brazil but also as a model for many countries in the world. Today in Brazil, all students were legally entitled to a school meal. Food was used not only for nourishment but also as part of an educational process: the programme accompanied feeding with holistic education. The school feeding programme was intrinsically and legally linked with support to local agricultural production and the social rights of vulnerable groups. Brazil was partnering with WFP and had been actively engaged in South-South cooperation through the provision of technical support to school feeding programmes in countries in Africa and Latin America.

Russian Federation

6. The representative of the Russian Federation shared the experience of the Russian Federation with school feeding within the current market model of post-socialist economics. Today, under President Medvedev (who had revived the school feeding programme), the doctrine of food security led Russian efforts to provide fortified meals to schoolchildren. He emphasized that the private sector and civil society were important partners of the Government in managing the feeding programmes on-site. Children were 20 per cent of the population, but 100 per cent of the future.

Haiti

7. The representative of Haiti said that the national school feeding programme in Haiti had been ongoing before the recent earthquake in January and, despite the many challenges, was immediately restarted, initially with some 40,000 meals a day provided to schoolchildren. The programme continued to be scaled up as part of recovery efforts and now reached almost 1 million children. The programme targeted not only children, but also parents and communities. The speaker highlighted as key elements of a sustainable national school feeding programme the following needs: improving the legal framework, local procurement and national capacities; working through State institutions; flexible funding arrangements and timely disbursement of funds from donors; and good partners. Currently, about 250,000 people had benefited from the school feeding programme from the Haitian national budget. Together with assistance from WFP (800,000), the World Bank (50,000) and the United States Agency for International Development (45,000), the number of children fed by the programme had reached 1 million. The long-term objective was to reach all of the school-aged children in the country, who numbered approximately 2.2 million. The Government of Haiti was currently developing a national school feeding strategy and was requesting support from partners to expand the coverage and the quality of school feeding in the country, which included increasing the amount of food bought locally for the programme.

Kenya

8. The representative of Kenya said that the primary focus of Kenya's school feeding programme was to make sure that Kenyan children, especially those living in rural areas, were fed. There were different school feeding models supported by the Ministry of Education and WFP in Kenya depending on the food security contexts of the area. Additional objectives of the programme were improved potential for local purchase, increased attention to the education of girls and improved quality of education. Beneficiaries of school feeding in Kenya totalled more than 1.9 million children, most of whom were girls. The programme also supported local farmers by using home-grown food products. Since the onset of implementation, however, the programme had not been without cultural challenges, especially since girls were still kept at home and were forced to marry early. There was still progress to be made in changing that cultural behaviour. No child should go to school hungry. By working together, we could make a difference.

World Bank

9. The representative of the World Bank said that there was considerable demand for school feeding programmes, especially after the recent food and economic crises. School feeding functioned as a social safety net mechanism, e.g., through conditional cash transfers, which benefited the worst-off children. Nevertheless, school feeding was least commonly implemented where it was needed most, although many low-income countries were striving to develop such programmes. School feeding was initially perceived as an expensive intervention; however, that view had since changed. A joint study by WFP and the World Bank called "Rethinking school feeding" showed that school feeding was effective if well-targeted to the needy, with strong national ownership and the use of local production. Empirical evidence indicated that, when combined with local purchase, school feeding had the potential to have multiplier effects in terms of educational outcomes, gender equality outcomes and agricultural development. It could be nutritionally beneficial, especially when linked to other health interventions such as deworming. The use of school feeding programmes had also been shown to increase the ability of children to learn, so the benefits were long-term. Although school feeding programmes could indeed appear to be expensive, they could be managed properly in order to minimize costs and maximize benefits. The World Bank and WFP were currently working together in 10 countries to support national Governments in developing and implementing sustainable school feeding programmes.

World Food Programme

10. The representative of WFP said that school feeding had been proven to be a good investment, with multiple impacts and benefits related to better health, increased learning capacity and increased opportunities for children, especially for girls. WFP school feeding programmes had reached about 22 million children since they first started, and were now implemented in 68 countries. WFP had a new policy and approach to school feeding that supported home-grown and home-owned programmes, which had long-term sustainability. It was possible to overcome the major challenge of funding if multiple sources of funding were tapped from education, agriculture, health and social protection. WFP was optimistic, with the increasing prominence school feeding was gaining in different forums, including at

the recent Group of Twenty (G-20) and Group of Eight (G-8) summits and Education for All meetings, and the representative highlighted the need for continued advocacy for school feeding and its role in ending hunger and the attainment of education for all.

Egypt

11. The representative of Egypt said that the Egyptian school feeding programme had been ongoing since 1951. Twelve million girls had benefited from fortified date bars and take-home rations. Under the Girls' Education Initiative, the focus was on girls because of the critical importance of investing in girls in a society that traditionally had not done so in the past. Other programmes combated child labour by getting children off the streets. School feeding attracted the most vulnerable, and ensured that families would let children stay in school. The health and cognitive abilities of the children in those programmes had improved. School feeding programmes were implemented in partnership with 16 ministries in the country, with WFP joining in 2004.

Interventions

12. The Forum was well attended, with approximately 100 participants from the United Nations, permanent missions of Member States and civil society. Interventions were made from the floor by the following Member States: Tanzania (United Republic of), Nigeria, Armenia, Brazil, Haiti, Russian Federation and Saudi Arabia. Interventions were also made by international institutions (including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations-affiliated funds and programmes), non-governmental organizations (Haitian Diaspora and a non-governmental organization from India) and from the private sector. Those remarks are summarized below.

13. The representative of UNICEF noted the importance of not viewing school feeding as a stand-alone intervention, but rather as part of a holistic life cycle approach, complementary to early child development and a contribution to improved nutrition. UNICEF stressed that school feeding could help where attention was paid to the right quality of food, in terms of micronutrient foods, and improved maternal health through education, which helped benefit children.

14. The Secretary of State for Animal Production of Haiti touched on the importance of ensuring the local purchase of food in order to combat food insecurity and support agricultural development. School feeding was seen as a main pillar of the Haitian food security programme and the reconstruction plan.

15. The representative of Saudi Arabia underlined the need to share best practices associated with the funding and implementation of school feeding.

16. The representative of the United Republic of Tanzania noted that school feeding was widely used in both developed and developing countries and should not be regarded as the exclusive purview of poor countries. He highlighted his Government's commitment to scale up its highly successful national school feeding programme and the importance of international assistance, including support from WFP.

17. Haitian Diaspora expressed support for WFP school feeding programmes in Haiti and called for international cooperation with the Government of Haiti to help

feed all children of Haiti through a national school feeding programme targeting all school-age children and purchasing food from local producers in order to foster local development. Haitian Diaspora also stressed the importance of school meals being nutritious but at the same time adapted to local food culture.

18. The representative of Nigeria raised the importance of addressing critical issues of sustainability and the costs encountered by Governments. She also spoke about the benefits derived from school feeding programmes.

19. A representative of a foundation working in India sought information on the scope for greater cooperation with partners and accountability measures for Governments implementing school feeding programming.

20. The representative of Armenia noted the unifying role of school feeding in the areas of development and education, and the useful experience of the Russian Federation in its cooperation with Armenia.

Closing remarks

21. The Chair noted that school feeding was a productive social protection instrument with multiple impacts that contributed to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals 1 through 5.

22. She noted that school feeding programmes were a development "best buy" during a time of shrinking aid volumes when donors were looking for cost-effective interventions that crowded in a multiplicity of positive outcomes. For example, school feeding programmes were notable for their ability to feed hungry children, increase their cognitive ability to learn and heighten attendance (particularly by female students) while jump-starting rural development and increasing incomes for farmers (the majority of whom in Africa were women) through the use of local procurement modalities.

23. The Chair closed the meeting by emphasizing the importance of a sustained partnership, including South-South cooperation, to reinforce national efforts in the area of school feeding, and confirmed school feeding as a legitimate intervention that should be adequately reflected in the outcome document of the September 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals.

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Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items: reports of the General Committee

Pattern of conferences

Letter dated 30 August 2010 from the Chair of the Committee on Conferences addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I am writing to you in relation to the provisions of paragraph 7 of section I of General Assembly resolution 40/243, according to which no subsidiary organ of the Assembly may meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly. Subsidiary organs wishing to meet during a regular session of the Assembly must submit their requests through the Committee on Conferences.

I wish to inform you that the Committee on Conferences has received requests from the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Disarmament Commission, the Independent Audit Advisory Committee, the International Criminal Court: Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute, and the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to meet in New York during the main part of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

The Committee on Conferences, having carefully considered those requests and the reasons for them, does not object, on the strict understanding that all such meetings would be allocated conference services on an "as available" basis, from within existing resources, in such a way that the work of the General Assembly and its Main Committees is not impeded. Accordingly, I should be grateful if the General Assembly would explicitly authorize the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Disarmament Commission, the Independent Audit Advisory Committee, the International Criminal Court: Assembly of States Parties to the

* A/65/150.

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Programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011

Joint Inspection Unit

Review of travel arrangements within the United Nations system

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Review of travel arrangements within the United Nations system" (JIU/REP/2010/2).

* A/65/150.

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REVIEW OF TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Prepared by

Nikolay Chulkov
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Joint Inspection Unit

Geneva 2010

United Nations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Review of travel arrangements within the United Nations system
JIU/REP/2010/2

Travel represents one of the largest parts of United Nations system organizations' budgets after staff costs. A conservative estimate of airline ticket expenditures of international organizations in 2008 amounted to US$ 1.1 billion.

While the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) has established a Working Group on Standards of Accommodation for Air Travel in the United Nations system, the role of the Inter-Agency Travel Network (IATN) as an advisory body on travel issues needs more prominence. The adoption by the latter of their own statutes stating their goals, objectives and procedures would facilitate the sharing of best practice, ideas and resources that would result in improved travel management system-wide.

The international organizations in Geneva took appropriate steps in 2001 to combine their travel volumes and negotiate with airlines for preferential airfares. In view of the fact that these organizations achieved savings of around US$18 million in 2008, they are encouraged to use these savings to create two positions to improve service quality and efficiency.

While there are many models/options for procuring travel services, such as creating an internal travel agency, purchasing directly from airlines, using a travel agent or purchasing online, the chosen method should correspond to an organization's needs and requirements.

The role of the travel unit within an organization should primarily be that of a facilitator and provider of customer services. However, these units have also been involved with the implementation of enterprise resource planning (ERP) travel modules and the organizational budget planning.

The implementation of ERP systems will alter the current travel arrangements workflows and effect changes in policies and procedures. The CEB commitment to achieving climate neutrality will lead to the adoption of sustainable travel strategies that will modify existing travel patterns. These improvements will necessitate the updating of existing travel manuals and policies. For efficient travel management, it is essential that all staff members are informed of their rights and responsibilities.

The recent financial crisis has resulted in some organizations making reductions in their respective travel budgets. Other measures to reduce costs include adherence to advance travel planning, expanding lump sum options, entering into joint airline negotiations, offering staff incentives and streamlining travel claims processing.

The recommendation stated below is for consideration by the legislative bodies.

Recommendation 9

The governing bodies of United Nations system organizations should request the executive heads to provide reports on travel expenditures by reporting period and steps taken to rationalize travel costs.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AHA	Airport Handling Agent
ARC	Airline Reporting Corporation
BSP	Billing and Settlement Plan
CCOM	Committee for Common Operations Management
CEB	United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination
CPAG	Common Procurement Activities Group
CTBTO	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization
CWT	Carlson Wagon-Lit Travel
DSA	daily subsistence allowances
DTIE	Division of Technology, Industry and Economics
ECA	estimated cost avoidance
EMG	Environment Management Group
ERP	enterprise resources planning
ETA	electronic travel authorization process
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FB	Finance and Budget
FFM	frequent flyer miles
GDS	Global Distribution System
GHG	greenhouse gas
GSA	General Sales Agent
HLCM	High Level Committee on Management of the CEB
HR	Human Resources
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IATA	International Air Transport Association
IATN	Inter-Agency Travel Network
IBE	International Bureau of Education
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	International Maritime Organization
INFM	Inter-Agency Network for Facilities Management
IOG	International Organizations of Geneva
IOM	International Organization of Migration
IT	Information Technology
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations system
KPI	key performance indicator
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPPBA	Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts
SBT	Self-booking tool
SCA	services clearing account
SUN	Sustainable United Nations
TMC	Travel Management Company
TCP	Travel Claims Portal
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNLP	United Nations laissez-passer
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOG	United Nations Office at Geneva
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization of the United Nations
UPU	Universal Postal Union
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

I. INTRODUCTION

1. As part of its programme of work for 2009, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) conducted a review entitled "Travel arrangements within the United Nations system" from February to November 2009, based on a proposal submitted by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

2. The objective of the review is to examine existing travel arrangements and consider best practice among United Nations system organizations with a view to improving services and reducing travel costs. Major changes within the travel industry and advances in information, communications and technology (ICT) have opened new vistas for organizations to manage and modify existing travel policies and procedures.

3. Travel represents one of the largest parts of United Nations system organizations' budgets after staff costs. International organizations purchased approximately US$ 1.1 billion of airline tickets in 2008.[1] This figure is a conservative estimate for while it includes both official and statutory travel, it does not take into consideration tickets purchased for peacekeeping operations or those under the lump sum options available to eligible staff members.

4. The present report is one in a series of JIU reports on travel in the United Nations.[2] While the previous reports considered the budgetary and efficiency aspects of travel in general or within a specific organization, the 2004 report focused on travel entitlements and conditions of travel. It examined and evaluated policies and practices of different organizations, highlighting good practice and identifying possible improvements, with a view to expanding these throughout the system, achieving where possible a certain degree of harmonization and a higher level of efficiency in travel.[3] As the last report is still under consideration and has not yet been formally presented to the United Nations General Assembly, the Inspectors have decided, for the current review, to focus primarily on the procedural aspects of travel. The JIU also issued a note on the United Nations laissez-passer (UNLP) in 2005.[4]

5. The phased introduction of enterprise resource planning (ERP)[5] systems in international organizations will result in paradigm shifts in travel management. While the changes are usually incremental and are implemented in stages, organizations often have to adapt current practices to take advantage of the efficiencies obtained in travel processing.

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[1] According to data provided by 41 IATN members. Accurate data was not easily obtainable as some organizations could not provide volume for system-wide travel, but only that originating from their headquarters. Some organizations could not separate ticket purchase amounts and per diem expenses.

[2] A/8900 of 24 November 1972 (JIU/REP/72/4) "The use of travel funds in the United Nations"; EB 5546 Add.1 (JIU/REP/74/3) "Report on the use of travel funds in the World Health Organization"; CL.66/15 of 9-20 June 1975 (JIU/REP/75/1) "Report on the use of travel funds in the Food and Agricultural Organization"; 100 EX/7 of 20 August 1976 (JIU/REP/76/2) "Report on the use of travel funds in UNESCO"; A/32/272 (JIU/REP/77/3) "Report on first-class travel in the United Nations organizations"; A/37/57 of July 1982 (JIU/REP/82/7) "Organization and methods for official travel"; A/41/121 of 6 October 1986 (JIU/REP/85/13) "Follow-up report on organizations and methods for official travel"; A/50/692 of 31 October 1995 (JIU/REP/95/10) "Travel in the United Nations: issues of efficiency and cost savings" and; A/60/78 of 1 June 2005 (JIU/REP/04/10) "Harmonization of the conditions of travel throughout the United Nations system".

[3] JIU/REP/2004/10, p. 1.

[4] (JIU/NOTE/2005/2) "Review of the Management of the United Nations Laissez-Passer".

[5] ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) is an industry term for the broad set of activities that helps a business manage the important parts of its business. The information made available through an ERP system provides visibility for key performance indicators (KPIs) required for meeting corporate objectives. ERP software applications can be used to manage product planning, parts purchasing, inventories, interacting with suppliers, providing customer service, and tracking orders. ERP can also include application modules for the finance and human resources aspects of a business. Typically, an ERP system uses or is integrated with a relational database system. The deployment of an ERP system can involve considerable business process analysis, employee retraining, and new work procedures (http://searchsap.techtarget.com/sDefinition/0,,sid21_gci213946,00.html#).

Methodology

6. In accordance with the internal standards and guidelines of JIU and its internal working procedures, the methodology followed in preparing this report included a detailed desk review, questionnaires, interviews and in-depth analysis.

7. The Inspectors, through interviews in person and by tele/videoconferences, sought the views of over 50 travel managers within the United Nations system organizations in various duty stations as well as Inter-Agency Travel Network (IATN) member organizations. A detailed questionnaire was sent to the travel managers in all JIU participating organizations and IATN members. In addition, close collaboration was maintained between the Inspectors and the IATN office bearers at various stages of the project, especially during the design of the questionnaire.

8. The Inspectors were invited to present their preliminary findings, based on the responses received to their questionnaire, at the IATN annual meeting in Washington, DC, hosted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). After the presentation, a short brainstorming session ensued and was concluded with the distribution of a one-page questionnaire by JIU dealing with travel-related issues where the IATN travel managers responded anonymously and in their individual capacities. The Inspectors were then invited to present this report at the 2010 IATN annual meeting to be hosted by the Commonwealth Secretariat in London.

9. Comments on the draft report from all the United Nations system organizations and those IATN members who responded to the questionnaire were sought and taken into account in finalizing the report.

10. In accordance with article 11.2 of the JIU statute, this report has been finalized after consultation among the Inspectors so as to test its conclusions and recommendations against the collective wisdom of the Unit.

11. To facilitate the handling of the report, the implementation of its recommendations and the monitoring thereof, annex II contains a table indicating whether the report is submitted to the organizations concerned for action or for information. The table identifies those recommendations relevant for each organization, specifying whether they require a decision by the organization's legislative or governing body or can be acted upon by the organization's executive head.

12. The Inspectors wish to express their appreciation to all who assisted them in the preparation of this report, and particularly to those who participated in the interviews and provided responses to the questionnaires and so willingly shared their knowledge and expertise.

II. TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS – SYSTEM-WIDE COORDINATION

13. The report focuses on the work of the Joint Human Resources (HR)/Finance and Budget (FB) Network Working Group on Standards of Accommodation for Air Travel in the United Nations system;[6] IATN and the International Organizations of Geneva (IOG) Working Groups on Airline Negotiations and Travel Agency and Visa Processing Services.

14. The Chief Executives Board (CEB) convened and chaired the first meeting (held by videoconference) of the above joint HR/FB Network Working Group in October 2008 in order to develop the draft terms of reference, decide on a time frame for the review and nominate a chairperson to lead the working group. The working group would build on the recommendations from the relevant JIU report[7] and the conclusions of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC).[8] Although a draft TOR was prepared, the absence of a chairperson to lead the Working Group has resulted in the non-observance of the agreed time frame for the submission of a progress report in Spring 2009 and an update to the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) in September 2009. Hence, at the 18th Session of the HR network held in June 2009, it was agreed that the United Nations Secretariat in New York would chair the Working Group as of October 2009,[9] which should hopefully expedite proceedings.

A. Inter-Agency Travel Network (IATN)

15. At the suggestion of the Inter-Agency Network for Facilities Management (INFM), and with a view to using the leverage of airline expenditures of all United Nations and related organizations, a group of 10 organizations with large individual travel volumes convened in Geneva in November 2003 to discuss with four large airlines and their alliances the possibility of concluding global airline agreements.

16. As a follow-up, the first meeting of IATN was convened in Beirut in September 2004 with 16 participating organizations, and a Chairman and Vice-Chair were selected for a two-year term. Subsequent meetings of this network have been held on an annual basis. The draft goals and objectives of IATN are stated below:

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[6] The HLCM at its 15th session in March 2008 agreed to form this group with the objective of developing a common recommendation on harmonized standards of air travel in the United Nations system.
[7] JIU/REP/2004/10.
[8] A/52/30.
[9] CEB/2009HLCM/HR/46, p. 16.

Table 1
Draft IATN Goals and Objectives

GOALS	OBJECTIVES	PRIORITIES
▪ Enhance and broaden a global inter-agency coordination and networking approach on policies and procedures that pertain to travel-related matters. ▪ To provide a forum for international organizations to share ideas, resources and best practices in the management of travel.	▪ To identify issues of mutual concern, establish specific objectives and assign responsibilities and timelines. ▪ To identify areas of commonality, which could be location specific. ▪ To support the sharing of information leading to the identification of best practices in the management of travel in international organizations. ▪ To reach an agreement on how we can maintain dialogue on a continuing basis between the annual meetings in order to make practical use of the network, resources and information derived from this forum.	▪ Improvement of strategic and long-range planning. ▪ Measures to improve performance measurement, service quality and customer satisfaction. ▪ Promotion of the "common services" concept for efficiency and improved services.

The Inspectors were informed that the above draft was never formalized. However at the 2009 IATN meeting, the membership agreed to adopt statutes which would state their network's goals, objectives and procedures.

17. The Inspectors noted from the Mission Statement issued after the Beirut meeting that IATN would "discuss policy, its implementation and effects on travel operations and make recommendations to higher management including HLCM." To date, no such recommendations have been issued, even though the members at the 2007 meeting agreed that IATN should serve as an advisory body to senior management on travel issues.

18. One positive outcome has been the development of the IATN wiki pages[10] by IFAD where IATN members have a forum to share issues of common interest, upload travel policy information and post minutes/presentations of the respective IATN annual meetings. These pages also host the UNICEF Hotel Directory (the 2008 Directory was produced in collaboration with IATN). This directory is available on a "read-only" basis to all travellers in the respective IATN member organization intranets.

19. The Inspectors noted that, 52 member organizations were invited to the 2009 IATN meeting.[11] However, the actual attendance was only 27. While some travel managers did not attend for various reasons, many had informed the IATN Chairman that they had not been permitted to participate due to either budgetary reasons or minimal support at the senior management level.

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[10] A collaborative website whose content can be edited by anyone who has access to it.
[11] See annex 1 for the list of members.

20. Senior management may not be familiar with IATN due to its lack of visibility (no website) and knowledge/recognition of its achievements. At the 2009 meeting most IATN travel managers informed the Inspectors that some of the important decisions taken at previous meetings had never been implemented and some participants were not able to constructively contribute to the general discussion as these individuals were not involved in the operational aspects of travel for the organizations they represented. The Inspectors agree that there is room for improvement in the overall structure and functioning of IATN. For example, IATN could not provide the overall travel expenditure of the entire membership. When considering the complexity, expenditures and volume of travel undertaken, and the cost savings/efficiencies that could be realized through the sharing of best practices among member organizations, IATN requires support.

21. The following recommendation will facilitate the dissemination of best practices.

Recommendation 1

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should support the activities of the Inter-Agency Travel Network through active participation and attendance of their respective travel managers at their annual meetings and encourage the adoption of the IATN statutes stating their goals, objectives and procedures.

B. International Organizations of Geneva (IOG) Working Groups on Airline Negotiations and Travel Agency/Visa Processing Services

22. The Task Force on Common Services in Geneva in November 2001 decided to create the above Working Groups, which nine Geneva-headquartered organizations[12] joined and of which only ILO, ITU and WTO were not party to the initial travel agency and visa services contract in 2002. ITU subsequently joined the latter group when the new travel agency contract entered into force in 2009. The combined volume of air tickets purchased by IOG members in 2008 was CHF 120 million (US$ 113.6 million).[13]

23. All IOG member organizations have benefited from negotiated airfares. The combined savings, commonly referred to as estimated cost avoidance (ECA)[14] in 2008 were CHF 19.24 million (US$ 18.23 million).[15] The Inspectors regret that ECA cannot be shown from IOG inception (2002); as it was not provided to them even though such statistics were made available at the time to IOG.

24. Although both Working Groups functioned, from inception, in an informal manner, they are presently governed by the statutes of the Common Procurement Activities Group (CPAG) of the United Nations Office in Geneva and Member Organizations.[16] As such, under Chapter II – Membership, the following entities may submit their candidatures to the CPAG Management Board to become members: "Existing or future Specialized Agencies connected with the United Nations, wherever their headquarters; or "international, intergovernmental or non-governmental organizations or activities financed from trust funds

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[12] The organizations were the United Nations Office in Geneva (UNOG), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Trade Centre (ITC), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

[13] IOG response to Inspectors' questionnaire.

[14] ECA is calculated using the following methodology: Least costly public fare available at the time of ticketing – Negotiated CPAG rate = ECA. Source: Minutes of the CPAG Management Board Regular Session 2008 (April 2009).

[15] Ibid., and does not include ECA for ILO, ITU and WTO as those organizations use other methodologies to calculate their ECA.

[16] Letter addressed to Chairman, JIU by Director of Administration, UNOG, in response to JIU confidential management letter dated 19 October 2009. The CPAG statutes were last updated in April 2005.

or special accounts, or any other Entity in the interest of CPAG, as approved by the Management Board, these bodies being hereinafter called "Associate Members". Unless otherwise specified in separate protocols as in article 5 of the Statutes, Associate Members are included under the general term "Member Organizations" in this document."[17] Currently, CPAG is comprised of 10 Member and one Associate Member Organizations.[18] The Inspectors are of the view that CPAG membership will increase, to the benefit of all, and as membership requires cost-sharing of the annual operating costs of the Group, its activities could and will expand.[19]

25. The current coordinator of the IOG Working Groups is the travel manager from WHO, assisted by the UNOG sub-unit travel chief.[20] The Inspectors note that these coordinating roles, which are carried out on a voluntary basis, are very time-consuming and performed in addition to normal duties and responsibilities. With regard to the ECA volume, IOG member organizations could allocate funds for two positions, i.e., one as Coordinator for Joint Airline Negotiations and Travel Agency/Visa Processing Services and the other to provide administrative support, thereby ensuring neutrality/impartiality and better services as internal resources are freed from time-consuming and complex travel management tasks.

26. The full-time IOG Coordinator could provide some of the deliverables of airline management, as listed below:

Table 2
Proposed responsibilities for IOG Coordinator

Airline strategy development and sourcing management	Airline strategy definition	Develop strategy and communicate to IOG
	Airline negotiations	Source and award contracts
	Airline contract communication	Communicate details of new contracts to IOG member Organizations
	Airline contract management	Ongoing management of contracts and supplier management on a quarterly basis
	Airline programme optimization	Examine contract, compliance, performance against goals, savings, risks, traveller behaviour and industry for specific categories, identify leakage and act to optimize savings
Travel Agency and Visa Services Processing	Oversight and control	Monitoring the activities of the IOG-designated travel agency on a regular basis and ensuring compliance on CPAG's behalf

[17] Article 4 of the CPAG Statutes (22 April 2005).
[18] These include the International Bureau of Education (IBE), ILO, ITC, ITU, UNHCR, UNOG, WHO, WMO, WIPO, WTO and the International Organization of Migration (IOM), being the Associate Member as listed in Annex I of the CPAG Statutes.
[19] "Every year, each Member Organization shall pay to the Financial Resources Management Section of the United Nations Office at Geneva its share of the annual operating costs of the Common Procurement Activities Group, in accordance with the proportions fixed by the Management Board. These costs shall normally comprise expenditures on personal wages and salaries and administrative costs." Article 17 of the CPAG Statutes.
[20] The ITU travel manager joins the IOG coordinators only for joint airline negotiations as she has previous travel agency managerial experience.

27. The following recommendation will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the IOG Working Groups.

Recommendation 2

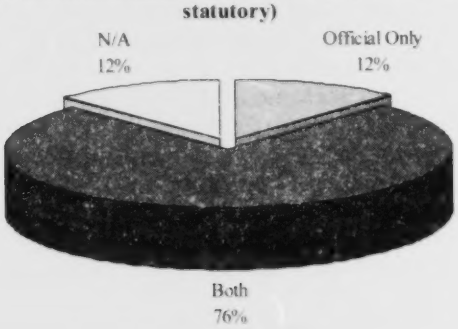
The executive heads of the IOG Member Organizations should consider the creation and financing of two positions for the Working Groups on Joint Airline Negotiations and Travel Agency/Visa Processing Services through ECA savings in order to improve service quality and efficiency.

28. The Inspectors are aware that other United Nations duty stations have adopted or are in the process of adopting similar travel arrangements, although not on the IOG scale. One such example is the United Nations office in Bonn, which shared its experiences and stated that administrative services (including costs) for travel arrangements for its 17 members[21] are governed by an inter-agency memorandum of understanding. Travel-related issues are discussed regularly by the Committee for Common Operations Management (CCOM) which reports to the Heads of Agencies.

III. INTRA-ORGANIZATIONAL COORDINATION

29. Travel arrangements at the organizational level are usually coordinated by a dedicated travel unit. Some organizations do not have a travel unit *per se*, and rely on the services of a travel management company (TMC). This approach is acceptable for organizations with small travel budgets, or where travel is primarily for simple, selected routes, where the resources dedicated for a travel coordinator cannot be justified. A distinction must also be made between official and statutory travel. For some organizations, as shown in figure 1 below, statutory travel is coordinated by the HR section, as the former concerns staff member entitlements and benefits and the latter is the authority on such issues. Nevertheless, the Inspectors were advised that the respective HR sections work closely with the travel units, especially in cases where the lump-sum options are invoked.

Figure 1
Type of travel handled by Travel Unit (official and statutory)

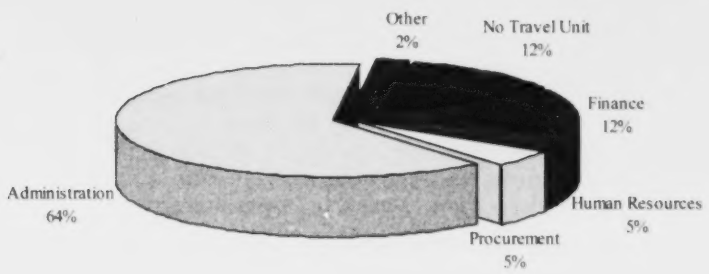


Note: Percentage calculated over 41 organizations

[21] Total volume of air tickets purchased in 2008: € 7.28 million (US$ 10.3 million). Source: Response to Inspectors' questionnaire.

30. The responses to the Inspectors' questionnaire (see figure 2 below) show that travel comes under the aegis of various sections. This reflects the inter-disciplinary nature of travel administration. While travel usually comes under administration (including where there is no separate travel section), the reasons for their positioning in other sections are logical: finance (as it involves expenditure and requires monitoring), HR (staff member entitlements) and procurement (obtaining travel services). While the Inspectors believe that the primary role of the travel unit is to act as a facilitator and provide customer services, organizations also appreciate its role in organizational budget and planning.

Figure 2
Placement of Travel Unit within the Organization's stucture



Note: Percentage calculated over 41 organizations

31. The Inspectors reviewed the structures of the respective organizational travel units. As the quantum of travel expenditures has a direct bearing on the number of staff employed for travel services, it is not appropriate to make system-wide comparisons. However, the Inspectors note that in the majority of the units reviewed, the staff member responsible for the operational aspects of travel and/or held accountable for the management of travel services is at the middle to lower management level. **Due recognition, respect, motivation and incentives (non-financial) should be given to these individuals, and if duly accorded, will be reflected through improved travel management services and staff productivity.**

32. Most organizations surveyed do not provide specific incentives for travel unit staff to achieve cost savings/administrative efficiencies, whereas IAEA, ITU, ICAO Travel Units have been given official recognition by their respective organizations[22] and UNIDO stated that most travel staff had either received merit awards, merit promotions or higher post reclassifications.

A. Role of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Systems and Information Technology (IT) in travel arrangements

33. While most organizations use complex ERP systems to manage travel arrangements, some organizations continue to use basic information technology (IT) applications. Figure 3 below shows the type of ERP systems/IT applications used to process travel arrangements.[23]

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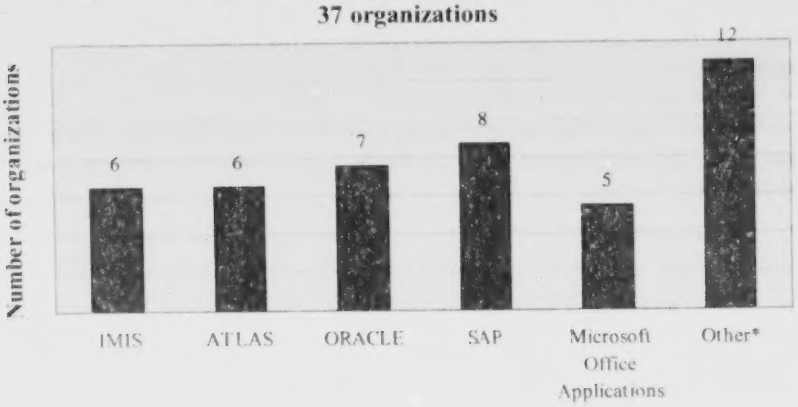
[22] IAEA Travel Unit received a Team Merit Award for Outstanding Teamwork in 2008, ICAO received a Team Cash Award and ITU was rewarded with a Team Recognition Certificate in 2004.
[23] Based on responses to the Inspectors' questionnaire.

Figure 3
ERP systems/IT applications used to manage travel arrangements in 37 organizations



* "Other" includes Infopath, intranet-based self-developed tools, Metastorm Business Process Management e-work (automation of paper workflow), Amadeus and Lotus Notes workflow

34. While 18 organizations using ERP systems have implemented customized travel modules, two organizations use the generic applications for reasons of cost. The Inspectors also note with concern that 10 organizations had conducted their most recent reviews of their ERP systems prior to 2000. The Inspectors are of the view that in order to reduce fragmentation, avoid errors, redundancy and deliver results efficiently, organizations should explore all available options to revise and upgrade their systems.

35. While some organizations have developed modules that support paperless workflow and electronic signature, for many, hard copies are required. ERP system/IT tools allow for the capture/presentation of relevant statistical travel-related indicators. These include, inter alia, showing for a reporting period, the (a) total number of tickets issued; (b) costs of tickets issued, (c) costs of daily subsistence allowances and terminal expenses; (d) type of travel (official/statutory and either staff/consultant/participants, etc); (e) travel per division in the organization and (f) travel per staff member. The Inspectors envisage that over time, organizations will switch to a paperless workflow and make better use of statistical indicators available to them in order to measure performance and evaluation of the use of resources.

36. Most organizations confirmed that their respective travel units were involved in the design, development, implementation and customization of travel modules in the ERP systems, and played a key role in defining process, business requirements, functionalities, assisting in technical evaluations, approval and testing. Nevertheless some travel units had no or minimal participation in these. To ensure that the implemented system/application meets all travel service-related needs and requirements, the Inspectors hope that **travel units are fully involved** in the entire process and participate in system upgrades and customizations.

37. Training on the use of travel modules in ERP systems has been given due priority by most organizations. This is conducted through regular training courses, e-learning tools or individual training when requested. The Inspectors encourage organizations to diversify their training methods and make them available on their respective intranets.

38. The Inspectors also asked organizations whether, in the travel authorization workflow, staff members had to indicate whether travel could have been replaced by other communication methods, such as tele/video conferencing or online meeting rooms. Only eight out of 36 organizations did this. **The Inspectors are of the view that tele/video conferences should be used more widely.**

39. The following recommendation will result in enhanced efficiency for the organization.

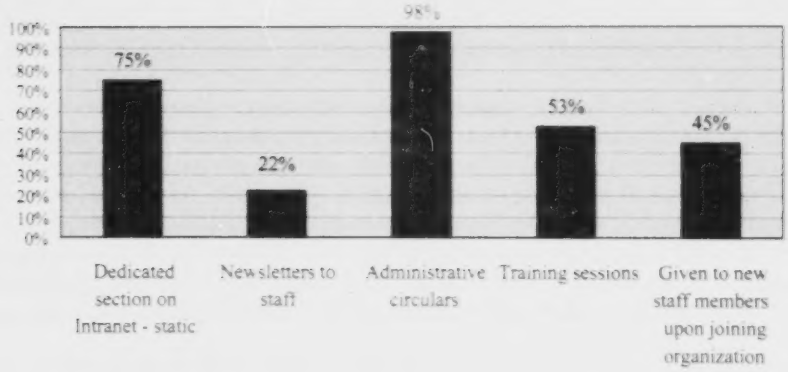
Recommendation 3

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should ensure, where this has not already been done, the exploitation of all available options to revise and upgrade their ERP system travel modules.

B. Dissemination of travel policies

40. Organizations were requested to indicate the manner in which travel policies and procedures are conveyed to staff (see figure 4 below):

Figure 4
Manner in which travel news/policies/procedures are disseminated to staff/programme managers in 40 organizations



Additional methods cited included Inter- and Field-Office memoranda, Staff Administration Management Instructions, Recruitment and Reassignment Brochures (UNHCR) and individual briefings (UPU). The Inspectors are aware that not all staff in a particular organization undertake official travel; nevertheless organizations should adopt more than one, if not all, of the methods listed above for disseminating information on travel policies. For efficient travel management, it is essential that all staff members are well informed of their rights and responsibilities.

41. The following recommendation is expected to enhance efficiency within the organization.

Recommendation 4

The executive heads at United Nations system organizations should ensure that information on travel policies (including entitlements and procedures) is updated and made easily available to staff.

C. Procurement of travel services[24]

42. Travel expenditure increases year on year. A number of organizations spend substantial amounts on travel, sparking the possibility of creating an internal travel agency. Despite arguments against this, such as "it is not our core business", some organizations have taken relevant steps. For report purposes, the Inspectors will set out two examples, those of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and International Organization of Migration (IOM).

IMF model

43. The organization requested and concluded an agreement with the Airline Reporting Corporation (ARC),[25] after clearing some administrative hurdles, thereby permitting it to purchase tickets directly in its own name. IMF thus receives (as it has registered its own travel agency) the commissions and overrides directly from the airlines. The organization also directly negotiates with airlines for preferential fares, through leverage of its purchasing power and selects a limited number that best service its needs.

44. IMF has outsourced its travel agency requirements to an agency through a tender process as it does not wish to employ staff directly on its payroll to manage these processes.

45. Strict compliance with existing travel rules and procedures is a *sine qua non* condition for the success of the IMF model. Indeed, the Inspectors were advised that, in the case of personal travel (only permitted in conjunction with official travel), where the traveller pays the fare difference, rebates earned on the personal segment are used to cover agency costs and not deducted from the airfare amount charged to the staff.

46. This model has generated substantial income for the organization. Moreover, the IMF Travel Unit is self-financed.

47. As IMF was able to conclude the agreement with ARC, the Inspectors are of the view that other United States-based international organizations with a similar travel volume, either individually or jointly, should consider adopting this model.

IOM model

48. The current Billing and Settlement Plan (BSP)[26] prevents organizations from registering their own travel agencies and adopting the IMF model. Nevertheless, avoiding the use of third parties such as travel agencies is possible by purchasing directly from airlines. Though rarely used on a large scale, one organization, IOM, has succeeded in establishing this operational structure.

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[24] There are different models for procurement of travel services within the common United Nations system. No one model is strictly applicable to all United Nations organizations, given the complexities of travel arrangements. The models listed are specific to individual organizations and it follows that these are somewhat customized towards the respective travel patterns and travel policies of individual organizations. It should also be noted that as technologies relating to travel management continue to evolve, as is the case with the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and online booking tools, competition among vendors in the travel industry will also continue to increase options for efficiencies. The rate of success in employing these models varies, due to the complexities of system-wide travel.

[25] ARC, a company wholly owned by member airlines, was established with the sole purpose of controlling, regulating and administering travel agency sales of its product, thereby ensuring that all ticket sales are correctly reported and paid for by such agencies in the United States.

[26] BSP is a system designed to facilitate and simplify the selling, reporting and remitting procedures of IATA Accredited Passenger Sales Agents, as well as improve financial and cash flow for BSP Airlines. By end 2008, there were 88 BSPs, covering 160 countries and territories serving 400 airlines, while gross sales processed amounted to US$ 239 billion. The system is accessible only to airlines, IATA accredited agents, General Sales Agents (GSAs) and Airport Handling Agents (AHAs) (www.iata.org/ps/financial_services/bsp/index.htm).

49. Movement of people is a core function of IOM and as such there is a special division in charge of airline negotiations, policy and procedure setting and quality control. Travel administration is decentralized with approximately 200 staff worldwide focusing on movements. Procedures and operational tools are web-based, accessible to all operational staff and include the Operations Manual (Movement Management Manual), Airline agreements (Handbook of International Tariffs) and Accounting (Integrated Global Ticket Order Record).

50. IOM offices are equipped with AMADEUS[27] terminals to allow immediate access to routings and fares. Ticket requests are directed to a centralized contact point. Upon receipt, all information relating to tickets (price, taxes, routing, mission ordering, etc) is entered into the IOM web-based Integrated Global Ticket Order, which is linked to the accounting system, thereby permitting instant payment by the Manila-based invoice settlement unit.

UNDP Travel Services (Country Offices)

51. United Nations system organizations have the possibility of using the UNDP broad network of country offices for procuring travel services, which include ticket requests (booking and purchase), processing visa requests, and making hotel reservations.

52. The Inspectors were informed that UNDP continually seeks to improve its services, including those related to travel. In July 2007, UNDP introduced progressive policies to improve the speed of settlement of agency services clearing accounts (SCAs). This initiative resulted in the resolution of 84 per cent of all disputes submitted to UNDP. UNDP currently services over 60 organizations via the SCA with a combined volume of Annual Income and Expenditures in excess of US$ 1 billion (FY 2007) and processed throughout over 140 UNDP country offices.[28]

53. UNDP is also researching market trends and practices in the commercial travel field and seeks to further improve its policies and practices in travel services administration in 2010. Furthermore, in recognition of the challenges of administering the SCA and recovering costs, UNDP will be commencing a review of the universal price list (UPL) system in 2010 to identify further options for efficiency improvements.

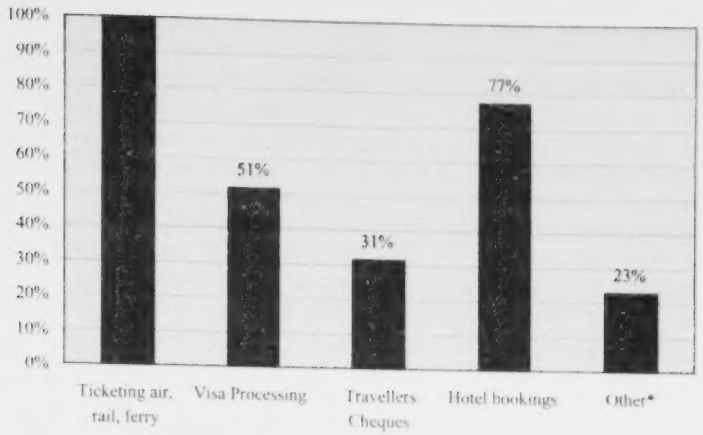
54. In light of the above, **the Inspectors are of the view that with the potential improvements in UNDP travel services and the UPL system**, eligible organizations will be among the beneficiaries that use such services.

Travel Management Companies (TMCs)

55. Most organizations surveyed use TMCs for procuring travel services. Those organizations that do not have internal travel units *per se* use the full range of TMC services, whereas some use their services under an "open book" or "management fee" structure. With advances in IT, some organizations use TMC self-booking tools (SBTs) for ticketing. The range of services provided and the location of the TMC has a direct bearing on the costs of such services. Figure 5 below illustrates the usage of TMC services.

[27] AMADEUS is a Global Distribution System (GDS) which permits the booking and purchase of travel services, including air and, train travel, car rental, hotels and cruise ships.
[28] UNDP – Agency Service Clearing Account (SCA) Handbook, 1 October 2009, p. 2.

Figure 5
Travel services provided in 35 organizations



* "Other" includes private travel tours, meetings and conference services, car rental, travel insurance and messenger services.

56. The Inspectors wish to point out that organizations use TMCs for other reasons, including the provision of management information reports on travel expenditures, cost savings, advance purchase analysis and carbon emission (CO_2) reporting and for advancing payment of airline tickets pending reimbursement. Use of these and other services usually results in direct or indirect costs to the organizations.

a. Open-Book/Management-Fee TMCs

57. The client organization and the TMC work together as partners with the aim of lowering transaction costs and travel expenses. The TMC shows the client the full view of earnings and costs incurred in processing all travel requests. The client reimburses the TMC for all costs which arise and the latter charges a profit margin on the total turnover.

58. An annual budget simulation is made, discussed and approved by both parties. The client may request quarterly or half-yearly budget reviews. Payments to the TMC are on either a monthly or per transaction basis.

59. The Inspectors believe that this is a win-win situation for both parties but client organizations must be provided with adequate resources to manage the TMC contract. In most cases, the TMC is an implant in the client organization and all office-related costs are borne by the latter. Furthermore, the salaries (including commissions and other benefits) of the TMC staff are usually lower than those of comparable client organization staff.

b. Transaction-based TMCs

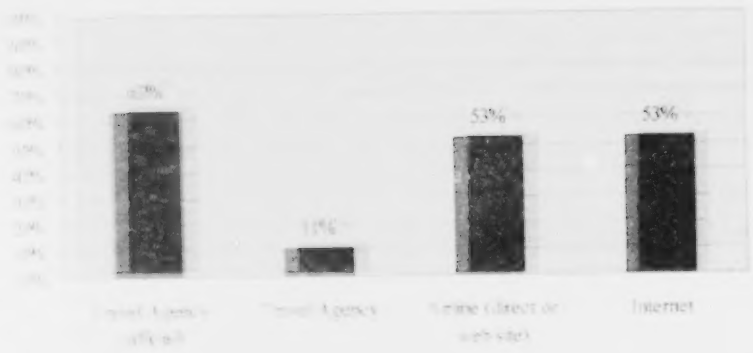
60. With the virtual elimination of commissions payable by airlines for tickets issued by travel agencies, the latter have resorted to imposing transaction or handling fees in order to recover their costs in providing services. This prevalent practice is perhaps the easiest to manage and permits transparency in terms of distributing costs among client organization departments, or client organizations where organizations have signed a collective agreement with a TMC.

61. The Inspectors note that such fees imposed by TMCs on their respective client organizations vary by location and, in some cases, within the same city. The overall fee is linked to the cost of individual/aggregate travel services provided. Hence the difficulty in conducting a comparative analysis. Needless to say, the higher the number of transactions per travel itinerary, i.e., booking, re-booking (issuance of new tickets) and possible refunds will result in "exaggerated" transaction costs and higher costs for the client organization. As such, **the Inspectors favour the "open-book" approach where costs are linked to turnover and thus manageable (within a specified budget).**

c. *TMC* Self-booking Tools (SBTs)

62. The plethora of commercial booking engines on the internet has facilitated the practice of purchasing travel services online. Such services can be usually purchased at lower cost and with no or minimal associated transaction cost. Familiarity in using such tools has resulted either in travellers using them for official travel and subsequently seeking reimbursement or using client-organization-approved SBTs.

Figure 6
Use of SBTs permitted/promoted by 19 organizations



63. Although only 11 out of 21 organizations surveyed permit the use of SBTs, the Inspectors note that the trend is towards the use of such tools and have been informed that some organizations will be implementing them in 2010 as SBT transactions costs are minimal and they work best for point-to-point travel. However, they are sometimes difficult to book for multiple-leg journeys. SBTs do not always indicate the best available rates and the client/traveller may not be familiar with all travel options. Furthermore, staff time could be better allocated to performing regular tasks and travel planning should be left to travel specialists.

64. Some organizations have travel staff who are trained travel specialists and thus, with the required access to the Global Distribution Systems (GDS) such as AMADEUS and SABRE, can make bookings for their travellers. However, as they do not possess the required science, they may request a TMC to issue tickets for a predetermined fee. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), for example, uses its travel unit to book travel services for "VIPs," on the basis that these travellers usually have complex itineraries which may have to be changed at a moment's notice. **The Inspectors favour this practical approach as it provides a personalized service for travellers, with lower transaction costs.**

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[1] Includes the Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General, Directors and Chiefs of Mission.

IV. STAFF MEMBER TRAVELLERS

65. For report purposes, this section will focus only on staff member official travel, as opposed to statutory travel or travel by consultants, temporary advisors and meeting participants, etc., which is governed by their respective rules and procedures.

66. In most situations, a staff member travelling for official purposes may do so only after having submitted an approved travel authorization, signed by him/herself, his manager and in some instances, a certifying officer. Furthermore, the staff member has the obligation and responsibility to ensure that he/she is in the possession of a valid United Nations laissez-passer (UNLP),[30] has requested the required visas; medical clearance (where applicable) and requested and secured the required security clearances.

67. In most organizations, it is either the travel unit or TMC that facilitates the obtaining of visas for official travel; however the traveller is required to submit the completed (and accurate) documentation on time in order to comply with the host country's visa request formalities and procedures. In cases where the air/rail tickets are issued and no visa obtained, the procedure for recovering the penalties/cancellation fees/higher ticket costs varies according to the organization. Some simply do not issue tickets without the visa, thus avoiding the issue. Others cover the additional costs incurred and the rest recover them from the traveller. In practice, each case is reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

68. The United Nations Secretariat requires medical clearance for travel[31] in the following situations:

(i) When a staff member is to travel on official business or is assigned to a duty station classified by the International Civil Service Commission in categories A, B, C, D and E. Those duty stations are identified in the annual information circular entitled "Classification of duty stations and special entitlements for staff members serving at designated duty stations."

(ii) Validity of the medical clearance for travel purposes is normally two years. To maintain medical clearance for reassignment and/or travel, medical examination will be required every two years, irrespective of age.

69. The Inspectors note that some organizations do not have a formal policy requiring medical clearance for travel, and for some it is not a requirement. WIPO, on the other hand, incorporates medical clearance in its electronic travel authorization process (e-TA). If the staff member is not medically cleared, he/she cannot travel. The medical clearance is provided just after the Program Manager's approval. If the traveller is not medically cleared, the e-TA does not continue further and the Travel Unit and Program Manager are informed by an e-mail generated by the system. Thus, for WIPO and other organizations requiring medical clearance prior to travel, the onus is on the staff member to obtain this and to seek and act on information from the medical service on recommended health protection measures.

70. United Nations security policy requires that all staff members travelling to countries with a security phase in effect must obtain travel security clearance. This includes in-country clearance, where required (locations in a security phase) and they must undertake not to depart unless or until clearance has been granted or where security clearance is not required (no-phase locations). It also states that all staff members are required to notify Designated Officials of their arrival and departure times for travel even to countries with no security phase in effect. Staff members are required to obtain security clearance prior to undertaking official travel, and requests for clearance must be made a minimum of seven days before travel. These security clearance procedures apply not only to all personnel of the United Nations, its

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[30] The UNLP is the official travel document of the organizations of the United Nations system and some others, and is issued to all staff and officials travelling on United Nations-related business. (JIU/NOTE/2005/2).
[31] ST/AI/2005/12 of 8 November 2005, paragraphs 4.1 (c) and (d).

agencies, programmes and funds covered by the provisions of the Field Security Handbook,[32] but also to those personnel to whom the agencies are obligated to provide travel.[33]

71. A prerequisite to the granting of security clearance is the completion of the system-wide, self-administered learning programme "Basic Security in the field: staff safety, health and welfare".[34] Completion of the test is valid for three years, at which point staff members must retake and pass the test.[35] Staff members who are assigned to, are required to travel to, or are being reassigned to, a duty station that is in Phase 1 or above are also required to complete the "Advanced Security in the Field" course (launched in 2006 and endorsed by the CEB) every three years.

72. Some organizations surveyed do not issue tickets without security clearance, while others purchase but do not issue tickets to staff members until clearance has been given and some, in cases where the destination is prone to imposition of sudden security phases, purchase flexible tickets with few or no booking cancellation charges. According to the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), the risk of security clearance being denied is statistically low. In 2008, 286,056 security clearances were granted and 15,542 denied, equivalent to about 5 per cent. A review of a representational amount of denied cases indicate that the majority (99.6 per cent) were denied due to incomplete travel and related data, whereas only 0.39 per cent of cases were denied owing to the prevailing security situation.[36]

73. While air travel is one of the safest forms of transportation, it nonetheless poses a significant risk, given the number of flights taken by staff.[37] The Inspectors were informed of the existence of guidelines offering guidance to United Nations system organization managers, who approve duty and entitlement travel, and to staff on aspects of commercial passenger air travel, in order to minimize exposure of staff to unnecessary risks.[38] They require organizations, inter alia, to establish and maintain documented procedures for the categorization of commercial passenger airlines, establish single-flight staff number restrictions and procedures for the reporting of aviation risk management concerns.

74. The following recommendation will ensure control and compliance with travel rules and procedures.

Recommendation 5

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should ensure inclusion in the travel arrangements workflow of provisions for the staff member to indicate, thereby assuming responsibility, that he/she has undertaken the required security training and requested security clearances, obtained medical clearance for travel when applicable, requested the required visas and possesses a valid UNLP, should such requirements not be in place.

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[32] Failure to comply with the Field Security Handbook policies and procedures could seriously endanger the lives of staff members and has implications for the liability of the organizations concerned.
[33] Field Security Handbook, 2006, Annex H, H.1.1.
[34] ST/SGB/2003/19 of 9 December 2003.
[35] Field Security Handbook, 2006, Annex H, H.2.1.
[36] Response to the Inspectors' questionnaire.
[37] Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN) Commercial Passenger Air Travel Guidelines (May 2006).
[38] Ibid., para. 6.

V. COST-SAVING MEASURES

Effective travel planning

75. There is ample evidence to show that booking in advance results in significantly lower fares. An analysis of 33,000 transactions made by 46 companies on 13 routes in 2007 shows that the average ticket price rises by approximately 2 per cent for each day closer to the departure date. Depending on the class of travel and route (advance booking discounts are more significant for economy class than for business class) the average ticket price can be more than 50 per cent lower when booked at least 14 days in advance.[39] Organizations should therefore request that their TMCs provide such information regularly.

76. Most TMCs possess the tools to show potential cost savings missed as a result of not purchasing in advance. For report purposes, the Inspectors wish to highlight an example from a Geneva-based international organization below:[40]

> Travel policy indicates that travel requests should be cleared and tickets issued 8 working days prior to the travellers departure. However statistics show 80% of planned duty travel is currently being approved less than 8 days before departure. However it is estimated that the Organization could **save up to Swiss francs 4.5 million per year at Headquarters** if tickets are approved and issued at least 10 working days prior to departure.
>
> Effective 1 February 2009, travel requests should be approved and tickets issued more than 10 working days prior to departure. The difference between the fare paid and the best fare available for that route will be indicated on the travellers itinerary, showing the additional cost incurred through late planning. Booking conditions will be taken into account by the travel agent at the time of ticket issuance to minimize any cancellation fees. Travel requests issued less than 10 days prior to departure with the actual fare paid will be recorded for monitoring and reporting purposes.
>
> Quarterly reports will be provided by cluster. Aside from statistics on general travel patterns and trends, the reports will also provide the number of travel requests approved and issued less than 10 days before departure and the cost difference between the fare paid and the best fare available on the route taken.

77. The Inspectors note that with advance travel planning, it is possible to bundle missions together, i.e. cover several meetings or destinations in one trip and limit the number of staff going on the same mission or to the same meeting. It also goes without saying that advance travel planning facilitates the tasks of all those involved in the travel process. Staff are under less pressure and have the opportunity to source the most convenient and least expensive options for the traveller.

Joint airline negotiations

78. United Nations system organizations in other duty stations have also taken measures to negotiate preferential airfares for the benefit of all. These include organizations based in New York, Rome and Montreal as well as those in proactive UNDP country offices. This practice will not only result in ECA but also reductions or waivers in current and future fees charged for ancillary services provided by airlines.[41]

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[39] Carlson Wagon-Lit Travel (CWT) Travel Management Institute, 2007 in "Playing by the Rules: Optimizing Travel Policy and Compliance, CWT, 2008.

[40] Information Note 2/2009 on travel efficiencies.

[41] These include charges for extra luggage, seating and boarding preferences as well as in-flight meals and other facilities.

79. The following recommendation will result in enhanced coordination and cooperation and significant financial cost savings.

Recommendation 6

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations and other international organizations using a city as a gateway for travel should reach agreement to jointly negotiate for preferential airfares, should they not have done so.

Staff incentives

80. Four out of 41 organizations responding confirmed that incentives are available for staff to reduce travel costs. These include the granting of additional per diems for travelling economy class when entitled to business class seating[42] and compensatory leave for flying on weekends. One organization stated that it was not "a commercial entity" and as such no incentives are given. An opinion was expressed to the effect that if such incentives are not directly given to staff, accrued savings could be donated by staff members to specific programmes within their agencies, or to staff development programmes. The Inspectors are of the view that an incentives policy to encourage staff to reduce travel costs should be introduced in those United Nations system organizations where this has not yet been done.

Lump-sum travel options

81. The lump-sum option for travel consists of a cash payment made to travellers with which they can make their own travel arrangements. It was introduced in most United Nations system organizations for certain categories of travel entitlement at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, not without controversy at the outset. However, owing to its flexibility and unquestionable advantage in reducing administrative workload, the lump-sum approach is today widely accepted and has recently been extended within a number of organizations to almost all existing categories of travel.[43] Figure 7 below shows the availability of lump sums depending on the type of travel entitlement. However, it must be noted that the lump-sum system has been in place without revisions to the economic model. This is in contrast with the numerous changes that have taken place within the travel industry and throughout the United Nations system organizations.[44]

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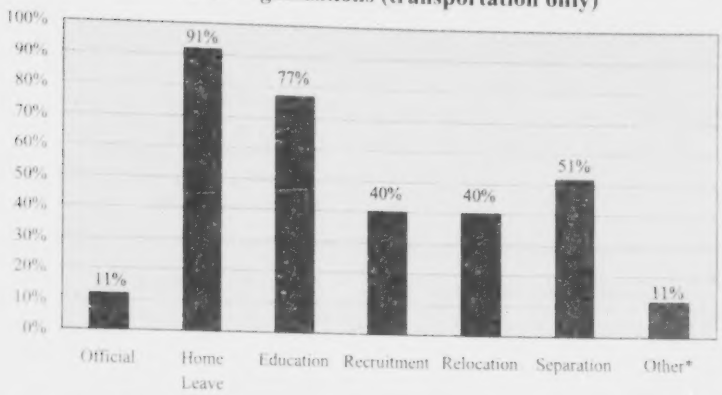
[42] However most organizational travel policies do not permit the transfer of cost savings to the traveller when the latter opts for a lower class of travel (thereby waiving his/her entitlement).

[43] JIU/REP/2004/10, para. 49.

[44] Statement by Mr. Tom Hanley, Chief, United Nations Transportation and Travel Section, New York at the 6th annual IATN meeting held in Washington DC, USA on 28 September 2009.

Figure 7
Availability of Lump Sum for types of travel entitlements in 35 organizations (transportation only)



*"Other" includes consultants (ILO), breastfeeding or single mothers with infants (UNDP) and family, reconnaissance and rest and recuperation travel (UNIDO)

82. The lump sum amount is calculated on a percentage basis (ranging from 50 to 80 per cent) of the IATA (International Air Transport Association) [45] full economy air ticket. As there is no system-wide harmonization of the calculation method used, this has resulted in staff members serving in different organizations at the same duty station travelling to the same place of home leave, with similar itineraries, receiving different lump sum amounts.

83. Furthermore, the latest IATA book rates are considerably lower than the previous rates and many lump sum amounts have fallen sharply. IATA has modified its tariff calculator. It now goes by the multilateral interline system, which provides interline fares to the world and is based on the average of individual carrier fares in the market. With the implementation of this new calculation method, if carriers publish lower fares for a market, the resulting IATA fares will be lower. These lower fares are less often available and the resulting price average will no longer be sufficient for the destination.

84. The Inspectors also note that no cost-benefit analysis of the implementation of the lump sum option has been undertaken. Indeed, this issue warrants a separate report on the subject and as such will be reviewed by JIU in 2010[46] as any modification will result in a change of the current rules and procedures that would require Member States' approval.

Specific measures taken to reduce travel expenditures

85. In view of the recent financial crisis, the Inspectors asked each organization whether specific measures had been introduced to reduce travel expenditures. Fewer than half of the organizations indicated that they had done so. Some examples are listed in the table below for reference. The Inspectors welcome these steps and hope that other organizations will take similar action.

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[45] "The International Air Transport Association (IATA) is an international industry trade group of airlines. IATA's stated mission is to represent, lead and serve the airline industry. One of its core functions is to act as a price-setting body for international airfares. IATA is pivotal in the worldwide accreditation of travel agents. Permission to sell airline tickets from the participating carriers is achieved through national member organizations. Over 80% of airlines' sales come from IATA accredited agents. IATA also publishes standards for use in the airline industry" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Air_Transport_Association).

[46] The topic is included in the JIU Programme of Work 2010.

Table 3
Specific measures taken to reduce travel expenditures

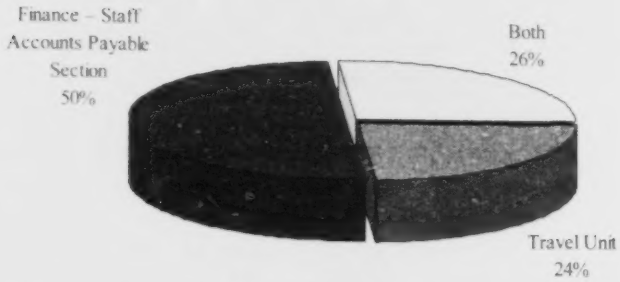
MEASURES	ORGANIZATION
• Reducing travel budgets	10% reduction (IMO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO) 11% reduction (UNICEF) 25% reduction (UNAIDS) 30% reduction in the case of Managing Directors and Directors (UNIDO)
• Increased use of video conferences and travel forecasting tools	OHCHR[*], UNAIDS, JIU
• Reducing the number of days for conferences, flying in economy instead of business class	ITU, UNAIDS (maximum 5 days in one location), JIU (in select cases)
• No more than 2 staff members to travel per event, business class only from 5 hours' flight duration	WIPO
• Business class from 10 hours' duration	CTBTO
• No more choice of carrier, early travel request approval and no private arrangements on travel requests	WHO, UNAIDS
• Enhanced monitoring of travel patterns and exceptions to policy	FAO
• Reduce number of rest stops to only one day after 16 hours of travel time	ICAO
• Improved access to e-communications as a means to reduce travel	UNEP, UNWTO, UNOV, UNOG, UPU, UNCTAD, UNFPA, UNON, UNFCCC, CTBTO, ILO, FAO

[*] The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) introduced the OHCHR Travel Forecast, through which staff members have to indicate the necessity (desirable, mandatory or essential) of a mission. Management can use this information to decide whether to decline or approve travel. It is also a tool for monitoring travel undertaken by staff and thus ensure, for example, no over-representation of OHCHR staff at an event.

VI. TRAVEL-CLAIMS PROCESSING

86. When asked which section processes the travel claim, the organizations responded as shown below in figure 8. It shows that the responsibility is shared equitably. In addition, the Inspectors were made aware that at least four organizations have off-shored[48] their travel claims processing away from headquarters; namely, FAO and UNHCR (Budapest), WFP (New Delhi) and WHO (Kuala Lumpur). According to the WFP Travel Manager, the feasibility study had taken place before the selection of the location had been made, and the actual decision, planning and implementation only took six months. The saving was considerable, around US$ 1.2 million.[49]

Figure 8
Unit/Section responsible for travel claim processing



Note: Percentage calculated over 38 organizations

87. The Inspectors refer to Recommendations 4 and 7 of the 2004 JIU Report on Travel concerning the self-certification and online processing of travel claims. The Inspectors are pleased to note that the trend is moving in that direction and prime examples include the WFP, IAEA and most recently United Nations Headquarters.

88. The Secretariat, after a pilot period, formally introduced the web-based Travel Claims Portal (TCP) in March 2009 for the processing of travel claims for New York-based staff members travelling on official business. The TCP will improve the overall process of submitting a claim, resulting in faster payments and provides the ability to track the progress of a claim and, if completed correctly, could lead to an approved claim in less than 24 hours. As TCP is based on the principle of self-certification, the responsibility for the accuracy and veracity of the information entered into the portal remains with the traveller.

89. Staff members may file travel claims in TCP in two ways: (1) Express Claim: to be used by staff members who travel as authorized and who are only claiming daily subsistence allowances (DSA) and terminal expenses or (2) Detailed Claim: used by staff members in cases where either a special hotel DSA is claimed; miscellaneous expenses claimed including portion of travel involving self ticketing (e.g. train travel within Europe); actual itinerary and/or travel dates deviate from those authorized; overnight rest stop entitlement exercised on one or both legs of the journey and annual leave taken in conjunction with official travel.

90. The Detailed Claim option allows users to attach scanned supporting documents, such as detailed hotel receipts accompanied by certification by a senior official in cases of special hotel DSA rates, and receipts of any miscellaneous expenses being claimed. While boarding passes and airline tickets are not required to

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[48] Off-shoring describes the relocation of business processes from one country to another. For a detailed analysis of experiences and lessons learned, see "Off-shoring in United Nations system organizations: offshore service centres" JIU/REP/2009/6.

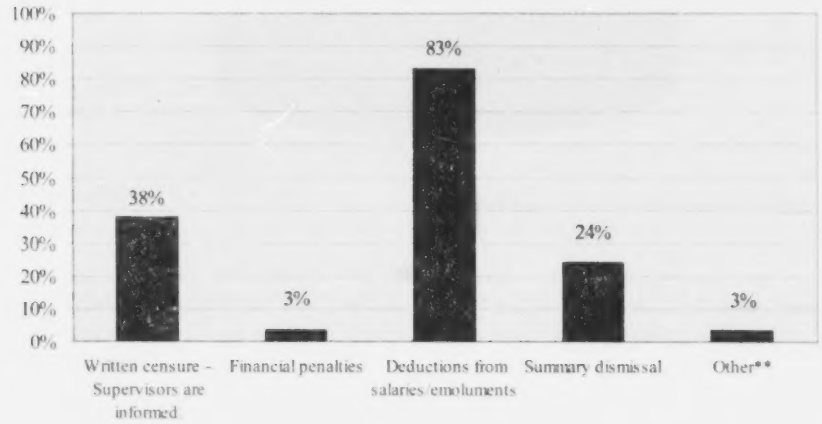
[49] Minutes – IATN IV, Rome, Italy 24-25 September 2007.

be submitted, staff members can attach scanned copies. In both instances, staff members must keep original documents for three years and are required to produce them for audit purposes.

91. Of the approximately 6,000 official travel claims submitted during the period January-November 2009, 2,400 claims were submitted through TCP. In due time, that percentage should increase.[50]

92. The Inspectors, while welcoming the implementation of TCP, presume that an adequate monitoring and auditing system is already in place to randomly check selected TCP claims. Furthermore, it is imperative that appropriate measures be adopted in the event of delays in submission or submission of fraudulent travel claims. While the latter scenario is rare, action taken must nevertheless be conveyed to all staff, thereby acting as a deterrent and the Inspectors note that FAO and the United Nations Secretariat refer to such cases in administrative circulars. Most organizations, on the other hand, deal with the staff member directly and confidentially. Figure 9 below illustrates the measures taken by organizations.

Figure 9
Measures taken by 29 organizations in case of late submission or fraudulent travel claims*



* Some organizations have adopted multiple measures.

** "Other" includes travel claims considered time-barred if received late.

93. The following recommendations will result in significant financial cost savings and ensure control and compliance with stated procedures.

Recommendation 7

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should incorporate procedures accepting self-certification of the travel as authorized, for those travel claims for which no additional funds have been requested by the traveller.

[50] Statistics provided by the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts (OPPBA) Accounts Division, United Nations, New York.

Recommendation 8

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should strengthen procedures, if this has not already been done, imposing severe penalties for cases of fraudulent travel claims.

Recommendation 9

The governing bodies of United Nations system organizations should request the executive heads to provide reports on travel expenditures by reporting period and steps taken to rationalize travel costs.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS TRAVEL ISSUES

Achieving climate neutrality – sustainable travel

94. The executive heads of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes at the 2007 CEB October session "committed" themselves to moving their organizations towards climate neutrality[51] in their headquarters and United Nations centres for their facility operations and travel.[52] Travel constitutes the major source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission in most United Nations organizations, typically 50-60 per cent, but in some cases up to 90 per cent, of total emissions.[53] Thus travel is an important area for senior management to consider when minimizing GHG emissions.

95. In February 2008, the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE), in liaison with the Environment Management Group (EMG) secretariat, established the Sustainable United Nations (SUN) facility with the aim of supporting the United Nations and other organizations to achieve climate neutrality and overall sustainability. To support the United Nations in minimizing the climate footprint of travel, SUN released a draft guide to Sustainable Travel[54] in the United Nations in September 2009, and a help desk was established to assist organizations to implement sustainable travel strategies. The Inspectors were informed of the cooperation extended by individual IATN members to SUN in the preparation of the draft guide and expects this to continue on an ongoing basis.

96. The Inspectors welcome the initiative of SUN in assisting organizations to achieve climate neutrality and take note of their draft guide which provides a number of references and approaches to sustainable travel and shows that reducing the climate footprint of travel can be achieved not only by decreasing the volume of travel, but also by choosing a different mode of travel (e.g. train instead of air), the planning of travel and the systems used to organize it.

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[51] The UN defines climate neutrality as "the entire set of policies that an institution uses when it estimates its known greenhouse gas emissions, takes measures to reduce them, and purchases carbon offsets to "neutralize" those emissions that remain, aiming at the highest standards possible." "Strategy for a climate-neutral UN, EMG/AM.07/05/Rev. 2, para 10.

[52] Annex II – Statement of the CEB "Moving towards a climate-neutral United Nations, CEB/2007/2.

[53] "Moving Towards A Climate Neutral UN: the UN system's footprint and efforts to reduce it" (UNEP, 2009), p. 15. It has been stated that data collection on GHG emissions resulting from air travel has been cumbersome. It is envisaged that organizations raise their commitment level and provide such data on a timely basis, ideally no later than the first quarter of the following year.

[54] SUN defines sustainable travel as "Travel where the associated environmental, social and economic impact is minimized, without negatively affecting the ability of the organization to deliver its mandate."

Frequent Flyer Miles

97. The majority of organizations do not have programmes for the recovery of frequent flyer miles (FFMs) for tickets purchased by them and stated that having such programmes for utilizing FFMs would be an expensive and cumbersome use of administrative resources. Although some airlines have instituted programmes whereby both the company and traveller accumulate FFMs,[55] the former would not qualify on corporate (negotiated) fares. Some organizations encourage staff members to voluntarily use their FFMs for future official travel, but this rarely occurs.

98. The Inspectors concur that the management of organizational FFMs is cumbersome and also not equitable (on what basis should rewards be distributed?) and policies/procedures would have to be adopted for their use. However, they refer to the innovative approach recently adopted by UNOPS to the use of FFMs, whereby staff members may offer to use their "personal miles" accumulated on airline FFM programmes towards the purchase of a ticket for official duty travel. Should this result in savings to UNOPS of at least US$350, the staff member will be reimbursed 50 per cent of the actual amount of savings to UNOPS.

Future prospects

99. Advances in the travel industry will have to be taken into consideration. The e-ticket, introduced only recently, apart from reducing costs and issuance of paper, has made travel easier. The implementation of pilot projects for the issuance of e-boarding passes will most likely gain widespread acceptance and use. This latter development will certainly facilitate the submission of documentary proof of travel and thus reduce processing costs.

100. The recent practice of airlines introducing ancillary fees, for services previously provided free, will also require organizations to modify travel entitlements, policies and procedures and to inform travellers as to which costs are eligible for reimbursement. Examples of such fees include, and are not limited to, extra charges for luggage (per piece basis), seat preferences and priority in boarding, meals and other in-flight amenities.

101. The implementation or upgrading of ERP systems will improve/streamline current travel arrangements workflows. The emphasis on the climate footprint of travel and the adoption of sustainable travel strategies will further necessitate modifications to existing travel entitlements, policies and procedures. Hence organizations, in consultation with the relevant departments/sections, have been updating their travel manuals on a regular basis. The Inspectors commend the reactivity of certain organizations in this respect, such as IAEA, IFAD, UNOPS, UPU and WFP.

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[55] Lufthansa, Swiss and Qatar Airways are some examples.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I

List of IATN Members in 2009

1. ADB
2. Commonwealth Secretariat
3. Council of Europe
4. CTBTO
5. EBRD
6. FAO
7. GAVI Alliance
8. IADB
9. IAEA
10. ICAO
11. ICC
12. ICTP
13. ICTR
14. ICTY
15. IFAD
16. ILO
17. IMF
18. IMO
19. INTERPOL
20. IOM
21. IPU
22. ITC
23. ITU
24. OECD
25. OHCHR
26. OPCW
27. OSCE
28. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
29. UNAIDS
30. UNBONN
31. UNCCD
32. UNDP
33. UNEP/DTIE
34. UNESCO
35. UNESCWA
36. UNFCCC
37. UNFPA
38. UNHCR
39. UNHQ
40. UNIDO
41. UNIIIC
42. UNODC/UNOV
43. UNOG
44. UNON
45. UNV
46. UNWTO
47. UPU
48. WFP
49. WHO
50. WIPO
51. WMO
52. World Bank

ANNEXES

ANNEX II

Overview of action to be taken by participating organizations on JIU recommendations
JIU/REP/2010/2

Report		Intended impact	United Nations, its funds and programmes												Specialized agencies and IAEA												
			United Nations*	UNCTAD	UNODC/UNOV	UNEP	UN-HABITAT	UNHCR	UNRWA	UNDP	UNFPA	UNICEF	WFP	(OTHERS)	ILO	FAO	UNESCO	ICAO	WHO	UPU	ITU	WMO	IMO	WIPO	UNIDO	UNWTO	IAEA
	For action		☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒
	For information		☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Recommendation 1		b	E		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Recommendation 2		g	E					E							E				E		E	E		E			
Recommendation 3		f	E		E	E	E		E	E		E	E	E	E		E		E	E	E	E		E		E	E
Recommendation 4		g	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Recommendation 5		d	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Recommendation 6		c				E	E		E		E			E			E	E		E			E			E	E
Recommendation 7		f	E		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Recommendation 8		d	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Recommendation 9		d	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L	L

Legend: **L**: Recommendation for decision by legislative organ
E: Recommendation for action by executive head
■: Recommendation does not require action by this organization

Intended impact: a: enhanced accountability **b:** dissemination of best practices **c:** enhanced coordination and cooperation **d:** enhanced controls and compliance
e: enhanced effectiveness **f:** significant financial savings **g:** enhanced efficiency **o:** other

* Covers all entities listed in ST/SGB/2002/11 other than UNCTAD, UNODC, UNEP, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR and UNRWA

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Programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011

Joint Inspection Unit

Review of travel arrangements within the United Nations system

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly his comments and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Review of travel arrangements within the United Nations system" (JIU/REP/2010/2).

* A/65/150.

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Summary

The Joint Inspection Unit report entitled "Review of travel arrangements within the United Nations system" (JIU/REP/2010/2) examines the management of travel services within agencies of the United Nations system and proposes actions that agencies can take to improve their efficiency and effectiveness.

The present report presents the views of United Nations system organizations on the recommendations provided in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit. The views of the system have been consolidated on the basis of inputs provided by organizations members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination. Agencies of the United Nations system welcomed the report and generally accepted its recommendations. While agencies suggested that some of the recommendations could have been improved through a more in-depth financial analysis, they expressed appreciation for the wide-ranging nature of the report, which covered areas as diverse as, inter alia, participation in the inter-agency travel networks, the expansion of the travel modules of the enterprise resource planning systems and recovery for fraudulent travel claims.

I. Introduction

1. The Report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Review of travel arrangements within the United Nations system" (JIU/REP/2010/2) examines the travel policies and practices of the United Nations system organizations with a view to improving services and reducing travel costs. The report explores, inter alia, the role of the inter-agency network of travel managers and the use of the enterprise resource planning system in the management of travel arrangements and the processing of travel claims.

II. General comments

2. The members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) commended the Joint Inspection Unit for having produced a very clear, comprehensive and constructive report on the practices of travel offices across the United Nations system. Agencies considered that many of the conclusions were practical and merited further consideration.

3. Agencies suggested that some of the recommendations could have been improved through a more in-depth and supportive financial analysis, which would have permitted a fuller understanding of the basis for any proposed improved efficiency or cost savings. This was particularly the case with respect to the International Organization for Migration and International Monetary Fund models for the procurement of travel services (see paras. 43-50). An understanding of the travel volumes necessary to deliver the benefits of pursuing those models would be welcomed. Agencies noted that some of the conclusions were based upon findings of non-United Nations organizations whose travel entitlements did not conform to those set out in the United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules; this should have been clarified in the report wherever relevant.

III. Specific comments or recommendations

Recommendation 1

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should support the activities of the Inter-Agency Travel Network through the attendance and active participation of their respective travel managers at its annual meetings and encourage the adoption of the Network statutes stating its goals, objectives and procedures.

4. Many CEB members indicated that they actively participated in the Inter-Agency Travel Network and therefore supported this recommendation. They took note of the goals and objectives of the inter-agency group and welcomed it as a source of information that allowed for benchmarking and the sharing of best practices.

Recommendation 2

The executive heads of the organizations members of the International Organizations of Geneva (IOG) should consider the creation and financing of

two positions for the IOG working groups on joint airline negotiations and travel agency/visa processing services through estimated cost avoidance savings in order to improve service quality and efficiency.

5. CEB members noted that this recommendation was of interest only to organizations based in Geneva. Organizations with headquarters in that city expressed support for the idea of exploring a joint mechanism that could improve services and efficiency. Those organizations noted the need for further investigation into the funding mechanism required to support this model and the concept (and benefits) of the "neutrality/impartiality" of the proposed mechanism identified in the report (para. 25).

Recommendation 3

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should ensure, where this has not already been done, the exploitation of all available options to revise and upgrade their enterprise resource planning system travel modules.

6. Agencies agreed with this recommendation, with many reporting that activities targeted at improving the travel functionality of their enterprise resource planning systems were either in progress or planned. They noted that the better travel planning achieved through these systems was also an objective of their cost reduction and greening initiatives.

Recommendation 4

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should ensure that information on travel policies (including entitlements and procedures) is updated and made easily available to staff.

7. Organizations strongly supported this recommendation, with most reporting that efforts to disseminate travel information were already in place. Agencies indicated that, through the creation and maintenance of Intranet websites, they were able to circulate information about updated entitlements, policies and administrative procedures. Some also reported that they had conducted training sessions for travel arrangers and senior manages.

Recommendation 5

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should ensure the inclusion, in the travel arrangements workflow, of provisions for the staff member to indicate, thereby assuming responsibility, that he or she has undertaken the required security training and requested security clearances, obtained medical clearance for travel when applicable, requested the required visas and possesses a valid United Nations laissez-passer, should such requirements not be in place.

8. CEB members generally supported this recommendation, although many indicated that it might take some time to incorporate verification processes for security, medical and other travel requirements into existing workflows. Such a delay would result primarily from the need to embed those processes into existing enterprise resource planning systems, an activity requiring careful planning and thorough testing.

Recommendation 6

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations and other international organizations using a city as a gateway for travel should reach agreement to jointly negotiate for preferential airfares, if they have not already done so.

9. Agencies generally supported this recommendation, with many noting that the practice was already common in some locations, in particular New York, Montreal, Canada, and Rome. Agencies at other locations indicated a willingness to participate in joint negotiations, provided that such agreements could lead to measurable advantages.

Recommendation 7

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should incorporate procedures accepting self-certification of travel as authorized, for those travel claims for which no additional funds have been requested by the traveller.

10. CEB members generally agreed with and supported the recommendation to include self-certification procedures within the overall travel claim processing framework; many had already incorporated such practices. However, some agencies, in particular smaller ones with relatively modest travel needs, suggested that the financial return might not cover the expenses associated with implementing the recommendation.

Recommendation 8

The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should strengthen procedures, if this has not already been done, imposing severe penalties for cases of fraudulent travel claims.

11. Agencies agreed with this recommendation and reported that they had implemented a variety of procedures for recovering unwarranted travel expenses. In addition, in line with the recommendation, agencies had issued administrative circulars and utilized Intranets to increase awareness regarding institutional practices concerning fraud, including with respect to travel.

Recommendation 9

The governing bodies of United Nations system organizations should request the executive heads to provide reports on travel expenditures by reporting period and steps taken to rationalize travel costs.

12. While agencies generally accepted the obligation to report on travel expenses to governing bodies, they noted the importance of first establishing clear and common benchmarks that could guide member States' decision-making, especially since the travel process included many variables that could change over time, such as fares, number of journeys and destinations. Such changes could make year-to-year comparisons very difficult. In addition, agencies noted that an isolated review of travel expenditure would have limited value unless it related to the activities giving rise to the travel, thereby providing context for any review. Some agencies noted that more comprehensive travel reporting might require the enhancement of existing or planned enterprise resource planning applications. Finally, agencies

two positions for the IOG working groups on joint airline negotiations and travel agency/visa processing services through estimated cost avoidance savings in order to improve service quality and efficiency.

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suggested that not all travel expenditure needed to be reported to the governing body, citing as an example donor-mandated travel charged directly to donor-funded projects.